THE MODERN GUIDE TO COMICS AND MORE

US$4.95 CAN.$6.50 £1.95

ESCAPE

NUMBER 11



NEW COMICS REVIEWED
including
SUPERMAN
THE 'NAM
CORTO MALTESE
H.M. BATEMAN
MOEBIUS

THE BEANO BOYS
LEO BAXENDALE AND KEN REID

ELEKTRA-FYING
BILL SIENKIEWICZ

HALO JONES
ON STAGE

38 PAGES OF COMIC STRIPS
including
BRIAN BOLLAND
WITH MR MAMOOLIAN
A NUCLEAR WINTER'S TALE
BY TIM BUDDEN
KRAZY KAT

COMIC ICONO CLASM

SWIPED!
COMICS IN ART
FREE ICA EXTRA

DREAMS OF AN INSOMNIAC
LORENZO MATTOTTI
ITALY'S MAESTRO OF MYSTERY

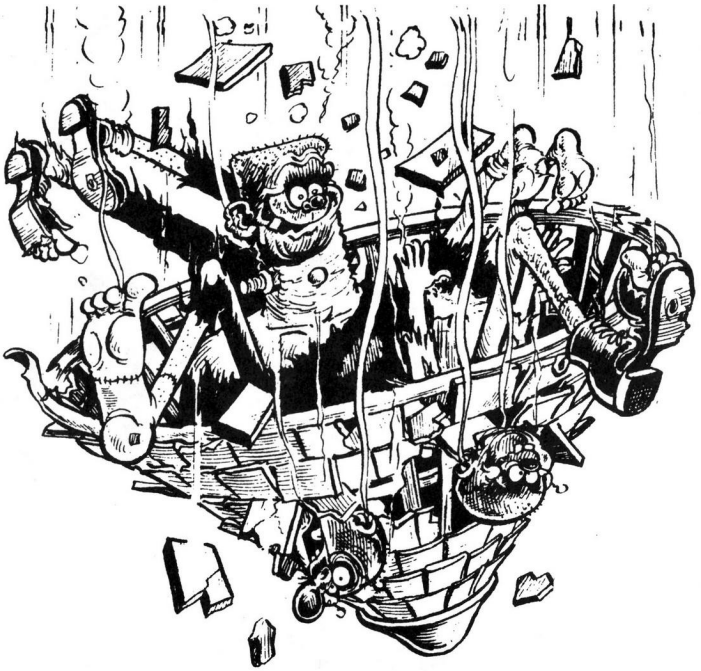


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ESCAPE

COVER: THE RED GUITAR BY LORENZO MATTOTTI

S T R I P S

8 A WINTER'S TALE
Tim Budden's chronicle of the Badgers

16 SAV'S WAX
All mod cons with Bob Lynch

20 KRAZY KAT
George Herriman in our mist

24 ALEC
Eddie Campbell's war games

30 INSOMNIA
Lorenzo Mattotti in the white hours

51 PANTHRA
Mark Robinson's jungle belle

62 FACTORY OF DEATH
The industrial strength of Gary Brady & Ed Pinsent

64 ABSENT FRIENDS
The best defence from Phil Elliott & Paul Grist

71 MR MAMOULIAN
Safe sex with Brian Bolland

72 TEMPTATION
Glenn Dakin in the Biblical sense

E D I T

4 POPULAR GRAPHICS
Halo Jones On Stage ● Paninari ● Bill Sienkiewicz ● Spidey's Marriage ● Scope

14 THE BEANO BOYS
Bash Street Baxendale and Scrunging Ken Reid

19 REVIEWS
Pat Mills slams The 'Nam ● Glenn Dakin sails with Corto Maltese ● Trevs Phoenix on Superman ● Ed Pinsent on H.M. Bateman ● Bob Lynch on Nervous Rex ● Paul Gravett on Hungarian Rhapsody

29 PROFILE
Lorenzo Mattotti, from Valvoline to Vanity.

35 COMIC ICONOCLASM
Our Special Supplement to the ICA Exhibition
The Principality of Lichtenstein by Paul Gravett ● High Brow, Low Brow by Paul Gravett ● Lives of the Superheroes by Ed Pinsent ● Art of Appropriation by Trevs Phoenix ● Modern Ott's Krucifixion of Krazy Kat by Savage Pencil

61 FAST FICTION
Small press comics worldwide

74 HIP PARADE
The SKP Barometer of Taste



AGH-H-H-H! IT'S 'IM!

It's Jonah, the world's most useless sailor, giving everyone that sinking feeling, from *The Beano* down below. And it's that bolt-necked monster Frankie Stein dropping in from the pages of *Wham!* They're both deranged brainchildren of the late great KEN REID, who joins his penfellow LEO BAXENDALE in The Beano Boys—more mayhem on page 14.



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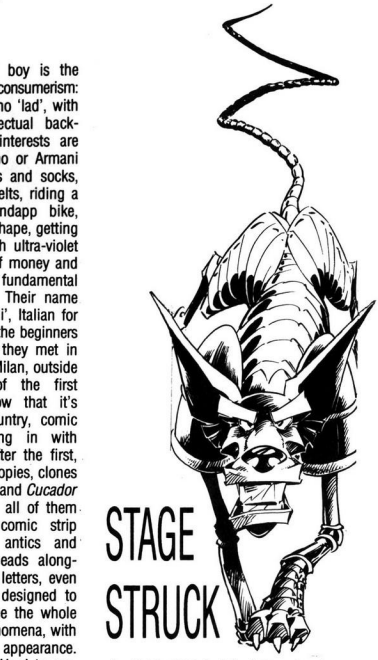
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BURGHY BABIES

In Italy, a 'Paninaro' boy is the perfect product of '80s consumerism: a hedonistic fake macho 'lad', with no political or intellectual background, whose only interests are Timberland shoes, Nino or Armani jeans, Naj-Oleari shirts and socks, El Charro boots and belts, riding a Honda XL600 or Zundapp bike, doing gym to keep in shape, getting a false bronze tan with ultra-violet rays and having lots of money and girls. This is the fundamental 'Paninaro' philosophy. Their name comes from the 'panini', Italian for rolls or burgers, which the beginners of this cult ate when they met in San Babile Square in Milan, outside the 'Burghy', one of the first hamburger joints. Now that it's spread across the country, comic publishers are cashing in with pocket-size comics. After the first, *Paninaro* sold 25,000 copies, clones like *Wild boys, Preppy* and *Cucador* burst up like acne. In all of them you'll find vacuous comic strip stories of 'Paninari' antics and 'Rambo'-style muscleheads alongside features, quizzes, letters, even slang dictionaries, all designed to reinforce the cult. I see the whole thing as a fashion phenomena, with no substance, only appearance. How long can it last? Hard to say, but surely four comics are too many? ≡*Ricci Oddone*



STAGE STRUCK

HALO JONES just had to get out. Her famous saying was: 'Anybody could have done it.' What she did was break out of the numbing confines of the Hoop, a futuristic dead-end for the unemployed, and

FROM 'THE FAKE TIMBERLANDS' IN *WILD BOYS*



POPULAR



FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. Parisian publisher Autrement has hit on the brilliant idea of sending bande dessinée creators on their favourite assignments abroad. Football fan Enki Bilal jetted off to Mexico City for the World Cup and sent back a bizarre vision of a Rollerball-style soccer of the future in *Hors Jeu.* Pierre Christin and Jean-Claude Mezières, writer and artist of the star-spanning *Valerian,* sailed away to the ports of Europe. Their book, *Lady Polaris,* (above) combines a journalistic travelogue with a detective mystery about a shipwreck, using comic strip, illustration, photos and text. This new genre of reportage-fiction, available from discerning specialist shops, continues with reports due in from Jacques Loustal in Tangiers and Jean-Louis Floch in Moscow.



become a hostess on board a luxury spaceliner. And now the story of Alan Moore and Ian Gibson's Hooplife heroine comes to the stage at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

'My biggest surprise with Alan Moore is that nobody has chosen to adapt his comics before.' This was New York director Elliott Stein's first reaction after reading the unique *2000AD* series. Andy Veal, founder member of the In The Red Theatre Company, admires *Halo Jones* for its three-dimensional characters. 'It's very rare to get a comic strip with such depth of character and such strong roles for women. As a play it gives a lot of talented actresses a chance, who would normally come on for just five minutes and say "Yes sir, is there anything else I can get you?". It treats all the male characters the way most other plays treat female characters.'

Lucinda Kirkpatrick, who plays Halo, has enjoyed having two references to work from, the script and the comic. 'Ian Gibson's drawings are always very in character and it helps to study their poses. As for accents, we're going for a cross between a Cockney and a Valley Girl.' The biggest male rôle is the robot dog Toby with his 'basic-obnoxious' persona-type. The mechanical mutt is played on all fours by Gregor Truter and, because the audience won't buy tin foil leotards and a plastic dog's head, he needs a convincing costume, especially while chasing Halo through the audience.

BELOW LEFT: DEBBIE HOWARD AS THE FIERY RODICE BRANDISHING A SPUTSTIK OPPOSITE HALO JONES, PLAYED BY LUCINDA KIRKPATRICK, RIGHT. ABOVE, THE ORIGINAL PANEL FROM *2000AD*.



In transferring comics from the page to the stage, most descend into spoofs or musical comedies, but Elliott Stein is sticking close to his source. 'Andy and I worked on the script and our criterion was, 'Is this true to the comic?' We've tried to translate it literally, with each location as a separate scene, using the comic as the storyboard. If the comic could live, that's how the play should be. You can read the comic, performing it in your head, but the beauty of the stage version is that you're really experiencing it, seeing the characters go through it on stage.'

One change is that the Hoop has been moved from Manhatten to London. 'We felt it lent itself more to Britain, so we've made Britain the 53rd state of the Allied Municipalities of America. The Hoop is very relevant, because it's the kind of place that could be created today, where the Government would push the poor people, the unemployed, into the background, so the rich aren't troubled by them anymore. I've walked through housing estates in London, sprawling masses of concrete, and thought, "That's a Hoop".

To bring this all-too-possible future to life, the play uses some impressive audio and visual effects. 'Thanks to the extraordinary Atari ST computer and its software, we'll be producing special effects comparable to others costing ten times the money.' And there's a glossary of slang in the programme for first-time viewers in the 'herdience'.

The play opened on August 10th at Theatreworks, Edinburgh, (Box Office 031 557 5151) as part of the Edinburgh Festival's Fringe First competition, where it runs till August 29th followed by a national tour. Only the first two books have been adapted, so what about Book Three? Elliott explains, 'It couldn't work on the stage. But I'm talking to Alan Moore about the film rights. It'll make a helluva film!' ≡

GRAPHICS

EDITED BY LOUISE TUCKER

'Blacks can be normal too—besides, I have a very good Arab friend.'

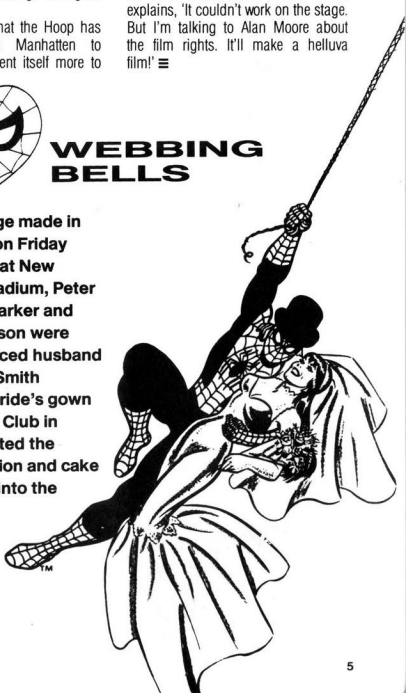
In a free newsprint booklet forty four artists, including Placid (right), Serge Clerc, Robert Combas and the Steamin' Muslims, attack disturbing reforms to France's nationality code. Any individual born there of foreign parents will no longer receive French nationality automatically but must have it granted (or refused) by the authorities. In his intro Jean-Luc Fromental writes: 'The sorcerer's apprentices of white integration model themselves on Mandrake the Magician: they want a Lothar, not a Malcolm X.'

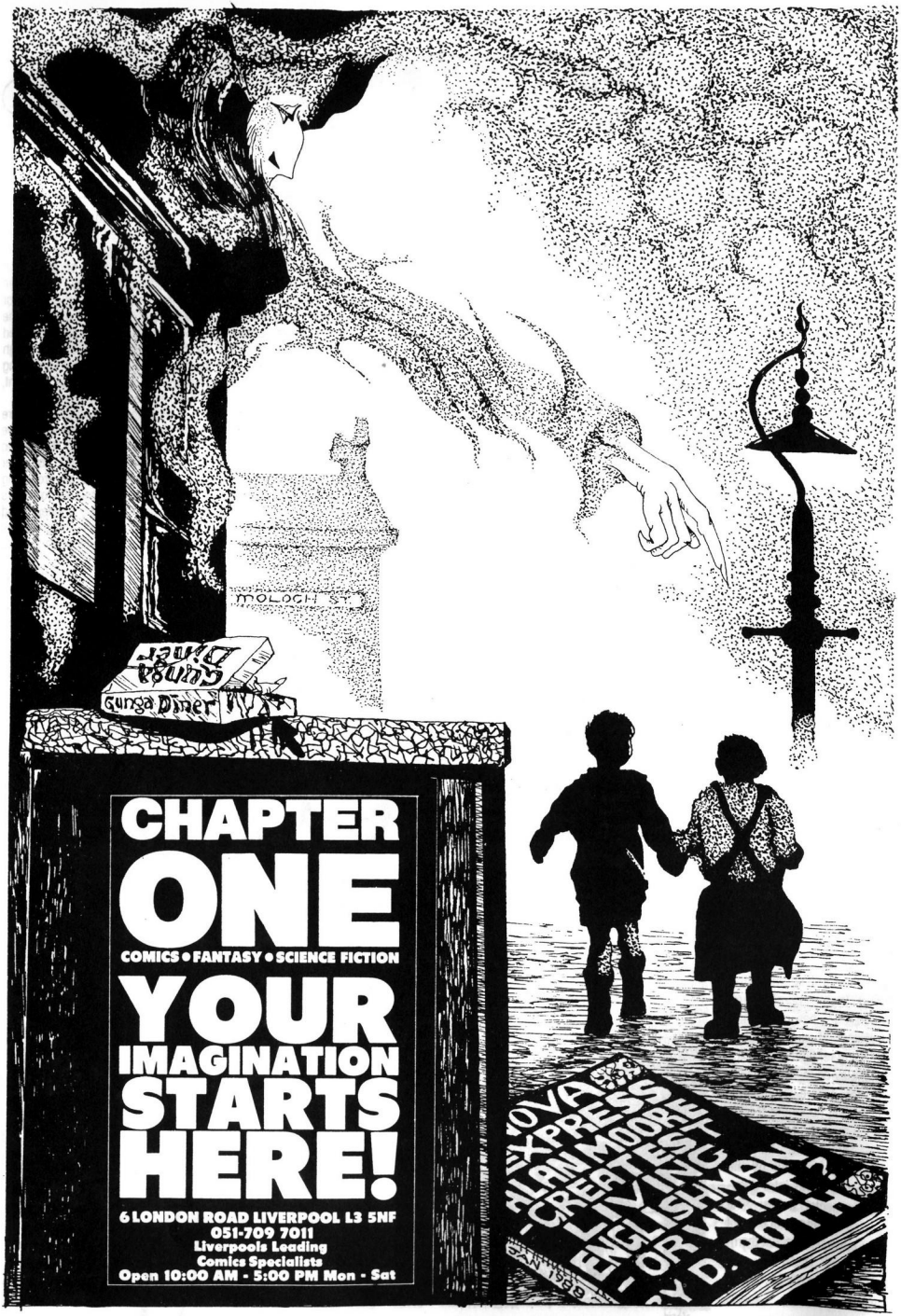




WEBBING BELLS

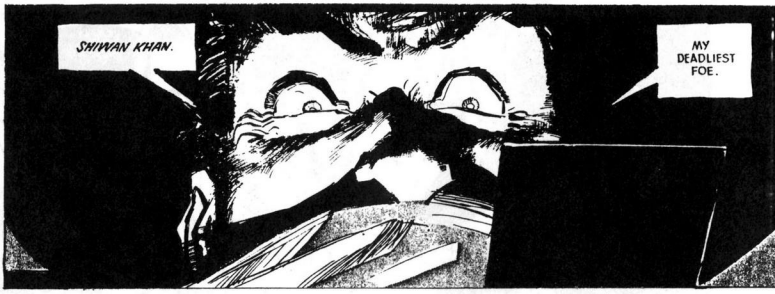
It was a marriage made in comics, when on Friday June 5th 1987 at New York's Shea Stadium, Peter (Spider-Man) Parker and Mary Jane Watson were finally pronounced husband and wife. Willi Smith designed the bride's gown and the Tunnel Club in Manhatten hosted the cocktail reception and cake cutting. Come into the parlour...




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SCOPE

Spielberg has chosen a director for his *Tintin* film next year—Roman Polanski, who, true to his Syldavian origins, wants to adapt 'The Sceptre of Ottokar' ≡ Publishing mega-magnate Robert Maxwell has paid £6.8 million for all of IPC's comics, including *2000AD* and *Oink!*, and plans to splash out more on promotion and new titles ≡ *Read Yourself Raw!* Save a fortune when the first three numbers of graphix manifesto *Raw*, now commanding dizzy prices, are reprinted in a Best-Of compilation from Pantheon. Co-editor art spiegelman talks about *Maus* at the I C A on September 10th ≡ Stand Up Comics! Alexei Sayle puts the boot in to just about everybody in his savage satire of Eighties London *Geoffrey the Tube Train and the Fat Comedian*, his first comic strip book illustrated by Oscar Zarate. Meet Alexei & Oscar at the lunchtime launch on September 12th at Café München, 15 St Giles High Street, W1 and in conversation on September 23rd at the I C A ≡ Andy Dog, graphist on *Escape* 6's cover and The The record sleeves, opens at Discretely Bizarre, a new gallery above Some Bizarre Records at 166 New Cavendish Street, London W1, with a month-long show from September 3rd to 29th ≡ *Strip Aids* originals are on exhibit at the Rochdale Gallery, Manchester till September 2nd with a final auction at UKCAC87 at London's Institute of Education on September 5th-6th, where you can also gape at a dozen Giant *Escape* Hang-Ups ≡ Among the eminent literary figures invited to Birmingham's Fourth Readers and Writers Festival in November are comic brat pack Alan Moore, Pat Mills, Hunt Emerson, Brett Ewins, Brendan McCarthy & Pete Milligan, in a series of blathers on November 15th. Tickets at £4 are on sale from September 1st from the Midlands Arts Centre on 021-440 3838



THE SHADOW NOSE! SIENKIEWICZ RESURRECTS THE SINISTER STAR OF THIRTIES RADIO AND PULP FICTION

HOOK, LINE AND SIENKIEWICZ

BLEACH BLOND BILL SIENKIEWICZ is a self-confessed 'style whore'. He began by consciously aping one mainstream influence, the popular superhero 'realism' of Neal Adams. But when the cries of 'Adams clone' wound him up too much, he 'short-circuited' and threw out all the rules. To confuse the critics, he decided that every art style was up for grabs, from illustrators like Ralph Steadman and Bob Peake, painters like Egon Schiele and Francis Bacon, and animators like Tex Avery and Chuck Jones.

'Nobody at *Marvel* had ever used the fun and anarchy of Steadman before. Initially on *New Mutants* it was very crude, I was wearing it on my sleeve. In American comics, you're expected to develop a style at a very early age and you can't deviate from it. If you take from other sources, you're indicted for "swiping". But I wanted to try something different and go on learning.'

'Hit It!' in *Moon Knight 26* started it all, a story about a boy, mistreated by his father, whose fear and anger explode as he grows into a violent adult. Sienkiewicz has said that this story is in part auto-biographical. 'As a child I was left alone a lot, so I never found it easy relating to people. I have a picture of the world as a frightening place, and my way of coping with that is to see the funny side—as David Lynch calls it, "the black joke"'. Sienkiewicz works out his fears on the comics page. 'Drawing comics is like art therapy for me'. The significance of childhood experiences and a dark visceral humour run through his eight-part series *Elektra Assassin*, a disturbed she-Ninja created and written by Frank Miller. It's heady stuff for supposed 'kiddie' culture and certain scenes sparked off criticism, including TV exposés and industry panic about the new 'sick' comics.

Amid the rumpus over violence and obscenity, most critics have missed *Elektra*'s cutting political themes, as it follows a Presidential campaign between a loony wizened Nixon–Reagan and a sinister smiling *GQ* Democrat. 'I see comics as a politically active medium. They should be subversive, upsetting the status quo.' On his stint on *The Shadow* at DC with Andy Helfer he targets corrupt televangelists. He has drawn the cover for *Real War Stories*, an anti-conscription anthology of true comics about war, from Viet Nam to El Salvador. And while in London he contributed to the benefit book *Strip Aids*, which he wants to help set up in the US.

Now he's wiring up for *Stray Toasters*. 'In *Elektra* I was going at a hundred and ten decibels all the time, but then what do you do to get somebody's attention? You whisper when you're supposed to and you scream when you're supposed to—that's the direction I want to go in with *Stray Toasters*. I can't do superhero stuff like Frank Miller or Alan Moore; all I can do is try to get my ideas across. I think a lot of anxieties and neuroses start from childhood, from the triangle of one child and two parents. I like to find out what makes people tick and what they've gone through to become who they are. In *Stray Toasters*, I want to put these ideas into a science fiction murder mystery.'



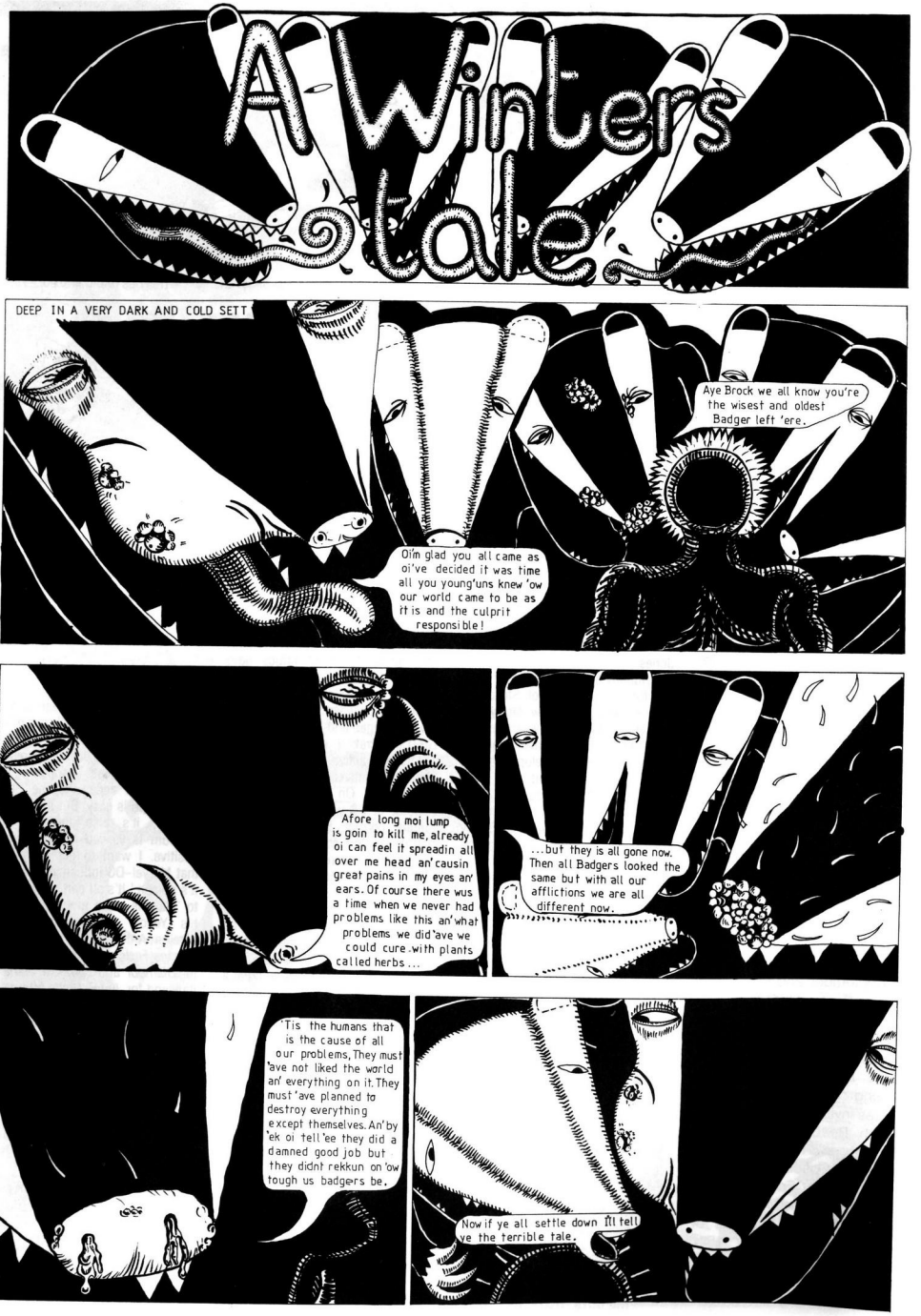
It's due out next year and by then he may move to London. 'I'd like to get away from New York for a while; there are a lot of interesting publishing ideas happening in London and access to the States and Europe is easy. But it's not just logistic; it's also the way the medium is viewed here, it's more positive. I want to get away from that Marvel–DC influence, creatively it's poison.' It's all part of his desire to 'become more global', following his Yellow Kid award as Best Foreign Artist at last year's Italian Comics Festival. He's drawn covers for *Glamour* and *Fumo di China* in Italy and for *Judge Dredd* albums in Britain, with silk screens and an imaginary *Tintin* cover in France still to come. This is one 'Connecticut Yankee' who's set to go 'global'. ≡

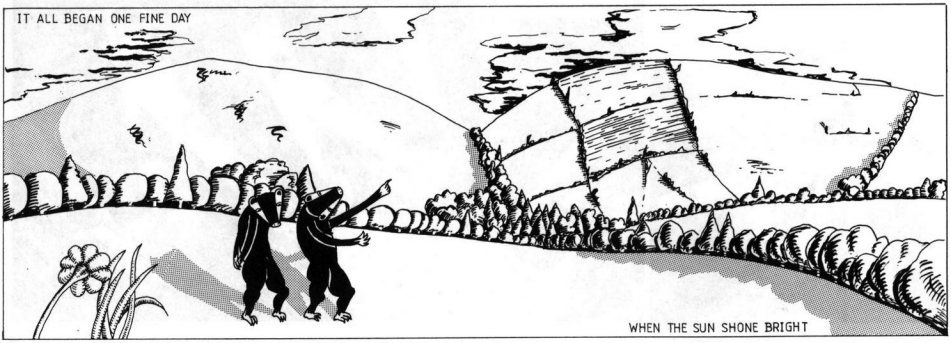


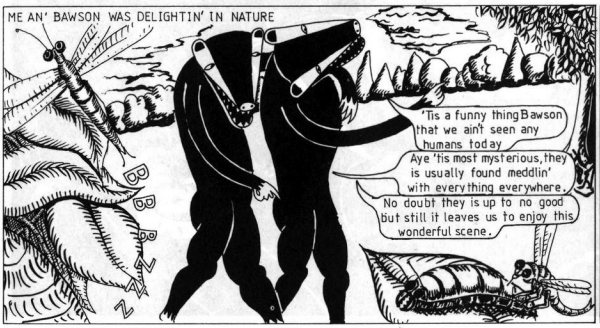
'I'VE GOT THE BOX AND I'VE GOT THE GUTS. THAT'S WHY I'M PRESIDENT.'

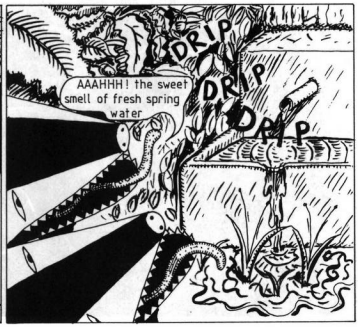


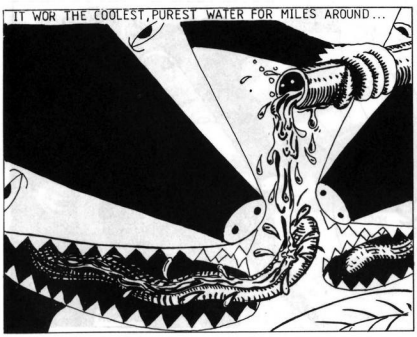
'HE CRIED FOR JOHN, FOR MARTIN, FOR BOBBY. KEN WIND—THE NEXT PRESIDENT.'

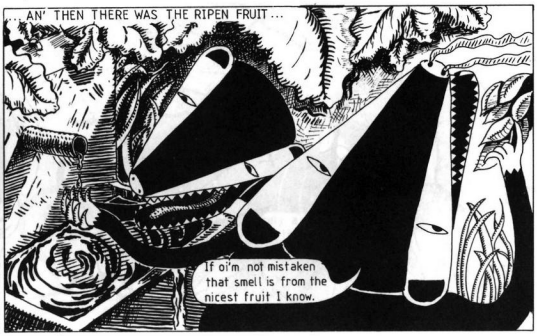

A Winters tale
DEEP IN A VERY DARK AND COLD SETT
Aye Brock we all know you're the wisest and oldest Badger left 'ere.
Oi'm glad you all came as oi've decided it was time all you young'uns knew 'ow our world came to be as it is and the culprit responsible!
Afore long moi lump is goin to kill me, already oi can feel it spreadin all over me head an' causin great pains in my eyes an' ears. Of course there wus a time when we never had problems like this an' what problems we did 'ave we could cure with plants called herbs...
...but they is all gone now. Then all Badgers looked the same but with all our afflictions we are all different now.
'Tis the humans that is the cause of all our problems, They must 'ave not liked the world an' everything on it. They must 'ave planned to destroy everything except themselves. An' by 'ek oi tell 'ee they did a damned good job but they didn't rekkun on 'ow tough us badgers be.
Now if ye all settle down I'll tell 'ye the terrible tale.


IT ALL BEGAN ONE FINE DAY
WHEN THE SUN SHONE BRIGHT


ME AN' BAWSON WAS DELIGHTIN' IN NATURE
'Tis a funny thing Bawson that we ain't seen any humans today
Aye 'tis most mysterious, they is usually found meddlin' with everything everywhere.
No doubt they is up to no good but still it leaves us to enjoy this wonderful scene.
BZZ
ZZ

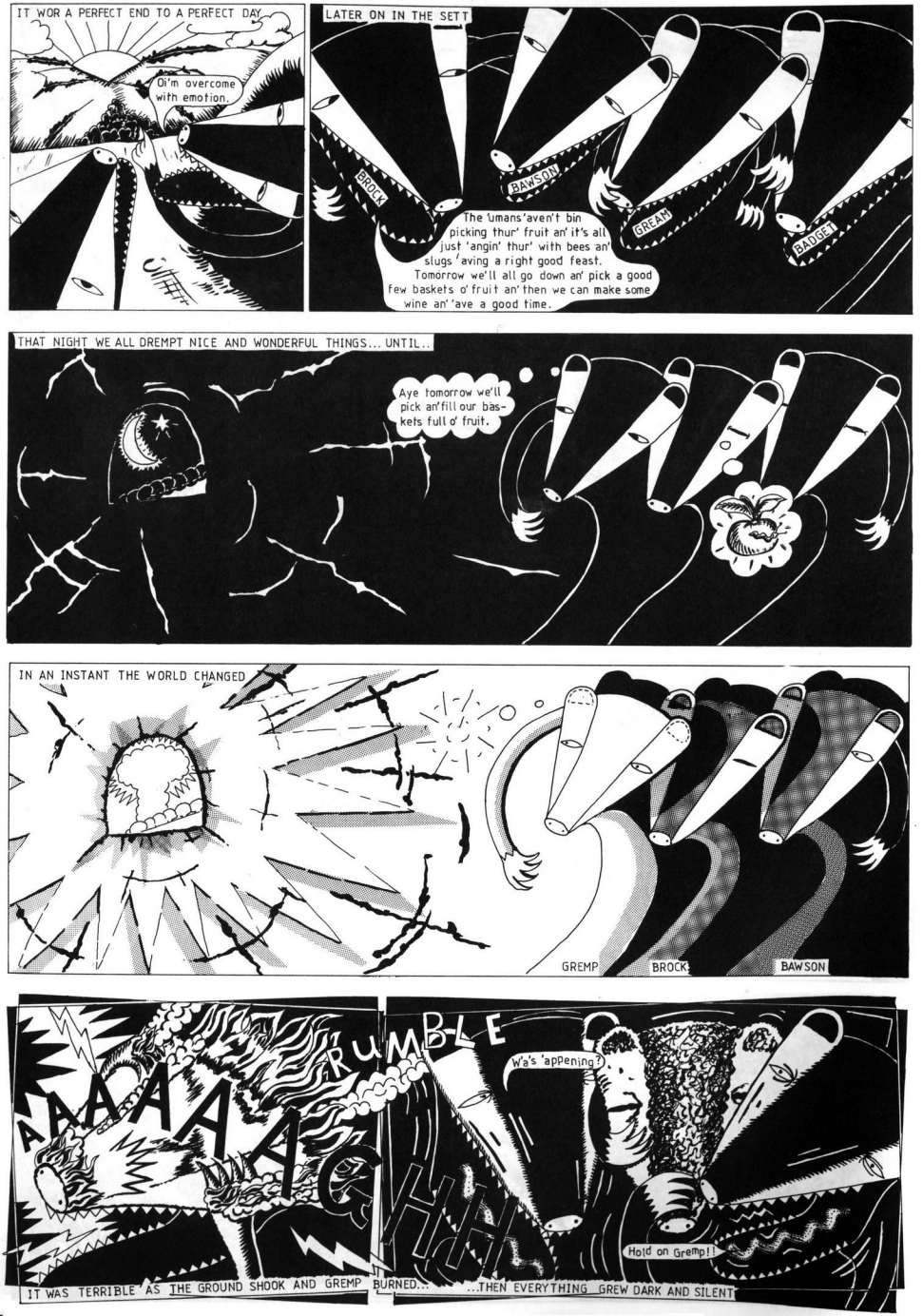

DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
AAAHHH! the sweet smell of fresh spring water

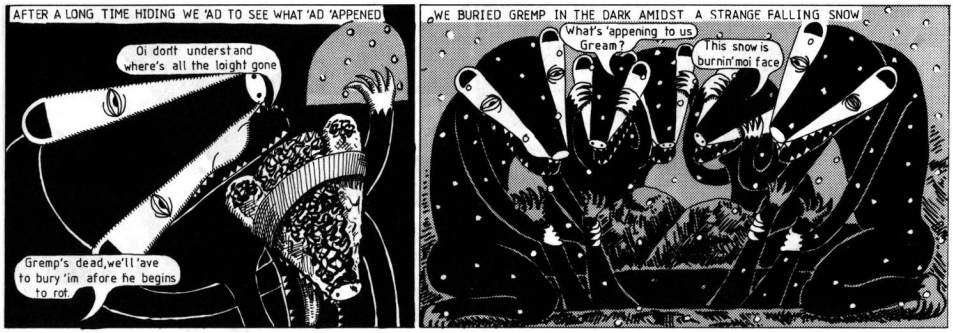

IT WOR THE COOLEST, PUREST WATER FOR MILES AROUND...


...AN' THEN THERE WAS THE RIPEN FRUIT...
If oi'm not mistaken that smell is from the nicest fruit I know.


...SO MANY AND RIPE SO VERY RIPE
Blimey 'tis strange that the humans 'aven't picked all this scrumptious fruit
BZZ
ZZ
Oi've never seen so much fruit just 'anging thur' waitin' to be picked.


CHOMP!
AND WE ATE AND ATE


IT WOR A PERFECT END TO A PERFECT DAY.
Oi'm overcome with emotion.
LATER ON IN THE SETT
BROCK
BAWSON
GREAM
BADGET
The 'umans 'aven't bin picking thur' fruit an' it's all just 'angin' thur' with bees an' slugs 'aving a right good feast. Tomorrow we'll all go down an' pick a good few baskets o' fruit an' then we can make some wine an' 'ave a good time.
THAT NIGHT WE ALL DREMPT NICE AND WONDERFUL THINGS... UNTIL..
Aye tomorrow we'll pick an' fill our baskets full o' fruit.
IN AN INSTANT THE WORLD CHANGED
GREMP
BROCK
BAWSON
AAAA


AFTER A LONG TIME HIDING WE 'AD TO SEE WHAT 'AD 'APPENED
Oi don't understand where's all the loight gone
Gremp's dead, we'll 'ave to bury 'im afore he begins to rot.
WE BURIED GREMP IN THE DARK AMIDST A STRANGE FALLING SNOW
What's 'appening to us Gream?
This snow is burnin' moi face


AN' THEN WE ALL STARTED TO FALL TO BITS FROM OUR AILMENTS
Ever since that blinding light moi eye 'as been burnin' an' now oi can't see a thing. It makes me frightened.
Oi've got a sore swellin' lump an' it seems that all our teeth are falling out
We is sure afflicted by the weirdest and nastiest things
An' me fur is covered by sores
You're lucky 'cos my fur is just fallin' out.

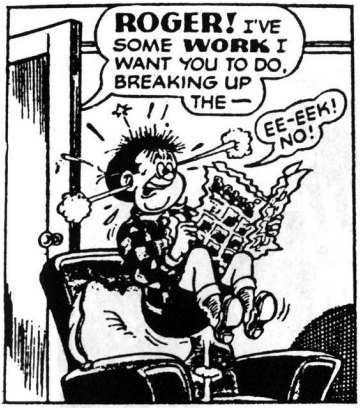

IT WUS LOIKE NIGHT ALL THE TIME AN' AS COLD AS THE DEEPEST WINTER...FOR FOOD ALL WE COULD DO WUS SCRAPE A FEW SEEDS
Oi don't like the look of this water Bawson... it's glowin' awful strange.
Thur's barely a snack 'ere fer a little 'un.


BACK IN THE SAFETY OF THE SETT
All me an' Bawson found were these 'ere seeds, there wus nothin' else, all is gone ...no herbs for medicine...no clear water fer drinkin'...we is all in a bad way.


FRIN WAS VERY PREGNANT AND NOT WELL
Oi tell ye Gream oi is greatly afeared fer me baby, he don't feel right an' oi is afeared we is all gonna die.
Every thing'll be alright Frin just as soon as the sun comes out an' mekes things grow. I tell ye oi need a right good warmin' now that me fur is fallin' out.


WE HAD TO TAKE SOME HARD DECISIONS...
Unless we warm Gream up he'll die!
We'll 'ave to cut the fur off Frin to cover him
Poor ole Frin you died afore you could see yer baby though he...er... they be deformed...but at least they're alive.
...IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE
Ah Gream oi found this old bit of fur at the back of the sett, it might help you stay warm.
Thanks Brock oi wus beginnin' to think oi would be freezin' to death.
AS WE SCRAPED FOR FOOD WE TALKED OF HUMANS, BUT IT DIDN'T STOP THE HUNGER SO WE HAD TO HUNT FURTHER AFIELD
GREY
PREMOLIN
BAWSON
GREAM
BADGET
BROCK
You know Badget it's those 'umans that 'ave done this, I thought it strange they hadn't picked thur' fruit.
Aye they wanted us dead but it didn't work did it?
It might do if we starve to death.
They managed to kill everything else but they didn't rekkun on'ow deep we dig our setts.
If ever I see a man I'll kill him!
Them couldn't kill us straight so they kill everything else an' they block out the sun an' instead of rain we've this dust that glows an' burns fur and eyes.
ON ONE OF OUR FOOD HUNTS
clik clik
Ah a reading
Blimey! look at that Bawson it's a light
Aye 'tis a 'uman with a light. This could be our chance to catch one, but we gotta be quick so follow me with the rope down to that tree.
BAWSON KNEW WHAT HE WUS DOIN'
clik clik clik
Nearly there
GRUNPH!
Come on just a little closer.
The Geiger's picking up some real big readings here.
clik clik
One more step
clik clik clik
Oi'm right on top of something big here.


HE WUS HUNG UP HIGH
UNNGH!!!
CHK
GITK
WE CUT HIM DOWN DEAD AND STRIPPED HIM BARE
Oi'll teach ye to make me blind in one eye!
Don't damage him too much Bawson
He sure wus wearing an odd skin.
WE DRAGGED OUR CATCH BACK TO THE SETT
He sure had a good size eye!
TWAS THE FIRST MAN THE BADGERS 'AD EATEN
An' this is for Frin(chomp) An' this is for Gremp(chomp)
Blimey! ee do look good enough to eat.
THE 'UNGER AND ANGER WERE OVERWHELMIN' IN DECIDING HIS FATE AND SO A FINE MEAL WUS HAD BY ALL.
RIP!
Oi ain't seen such clean flesh since afore the disaster.
Well at least when we die well 'ave full bellies.
BELCH!
BACK IN THE PRESENT
It was soon after that that Badget died followed by Bawson an' Fremlin an' Gream an' Grey till there was only me to look after you lot. Never forget yer mothers Frin an' Grey for they wus very brave.
Well that's what happened to us all that time ago. Oi wants you all to remember that tale so you knows why we hate the humans an' how in the end all me friends died from thur ailments. Remember that the human is your enemy but ee does 'ave the finest flesh around so always 'ave a good stock at hand.
END

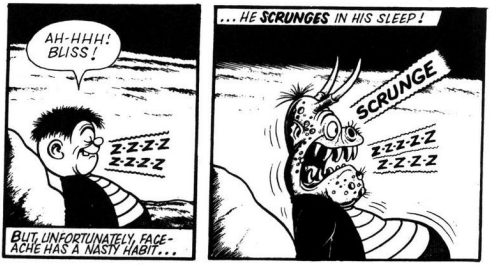






LEFT: *THE BEANO*'S ROGER THE DODGER.
ABOVE: FRANKIE STEIN FROM *WHAM!* 1965





THE BEANO

From 'Roger the Dodger' and 'Jonah' in *The Beano* of the Fifties through 'Frankie Stein' and 'The Nervs' in *Wham!* and *Smash!* in the Sixties to 'Faceache' in today's *Buster*, British weekly comics have been a weirder, wackier place thanks to the warped genius of Ken Reid. His fifty-year cartooning career dates back to 1938 when he began the popular children's strip 'Fudge the Elf' for his local paper, the *Manchester Evening News*. On February 2nd 1987, while working on a new 'Faceache' page, he suffered a stroke and died at the age of sixty-seven. But, as these comments show, he will never be forgotten.

'Ken Reid's finest creations for children's comics (and these were adult characters—in particular Jonah and Jasper the Grasper) had a quality of intensity of comedy. Such intensity is a drain on the nervous system, and Jonah took a toll of Ken. The "all-time great" characters of comics history are generally marked by longevity. Jonah ran for only six years, but that was by quirk of circumstance. Jonah, an incandescent creation, and the immortal "Aghhhh! It's 'IM!" live persistently in the mind.'

LEO BAXENDALE
Creator of 'The Bash Street Kids' and other *Beano* classics.

'My fondest memories of Ken's work—apart from the immortal "Jonah"—are "Frankie Stein" and "Georgie's Germs". He was into anarchic black comedy decades before it was fashionable and to my mind is still ahead of his time. People still wince when I tell them about a classic "Frankie Stein" where the monster needs a pair of feet warmers and solves the problem by putting a kitten in each boot. This was twenty years before *The Young Ones*. And there was the mysterious dummy strip Ken drew, which I heard about when I was starting *2000AD*. It was about a ghastly survivor of nuclear war, who tries to commit suicide in a different way every week, but he is prevented by a foul growth on his body which could turn into different shapes—a propeller, parachute etc. I was mad keen on it, but The Powers That Be refused to let me see it and, as far as I know, it's still locked away in some IPC vault.

'I felt that his creativity was stifled at the "Fun Factory". Their attitude to him was far from enthusiastic. ("It's all very well you saying he's brilliant, Pat, but he won't follow the script—he keeps adding masses of extra pictures. And we have to keep whitening out the dogshit!") It's a bloody shame he didn't get the wide recognition he deserved—not to mention the royalties. As far as I know he would have had no choice but to sell all his rights, like the rest of us, to make a living—for "Jonah", "Faceache", the lot. And years before, when IPC took over *Smash!*/*Wham!*, the Managing Editor axed "Georgie's Germs" saying it was the most disgusting thing he'd ever seen. If you know anything about the judgement of the people who ran the "Fun Factory", you'll know that's actually a helluva compliment.'

PAT MILLS
Writer of *Nemesis, Slaine, Charlie's War* and *Marshall Law*.

Ken Reid seduced this innocent at an early age with a book I picked up at a jumble sale, *Fudge and the Dragon*. It was primarily kids' stuff, a stab at cashing in on the *Rupert Bear* boom that I would normally have left alone. But something satisfyingly oddball in the drawing style made me eager to lock onto it. That example of Ken Reid's considerable talent is now out of my clutches, trashed by the passing of time. Yet I've never forgotten the effect his art had on my still developing imagination. Together with the *Mad* and *Zap* artists, Roth, Mouse and Herriman, Ken Reid made me *want* to draw, to try and nudge a little closer to his genius. Some twenty odd years later and I'm still trying.'

SAVAGE PENCIL
Re-Animator of 'Mr Inferno' and 'Dead Duck'.

'What drew me to Ken Reid's stuff was the way he went completely over the top. Instead of the usual comeuppance of the whacked bum, Reid's characters ended up with multiple contusions, blistering black eyes, cauliflower ears that looked like lumps of chewing gum, tongues hanging out at the side of their mouths. And there were his utterly ridiculous plot devices, like the Custard Factory cooling tower full of custard that you just *knew* would explode or erupt or have other catastrophic results. Ken Reid lives on in his work and all of us who were touched by his humour are, in our own different comics, creating 'memorials' to Reid and those other masters in that great studio in the sky.'

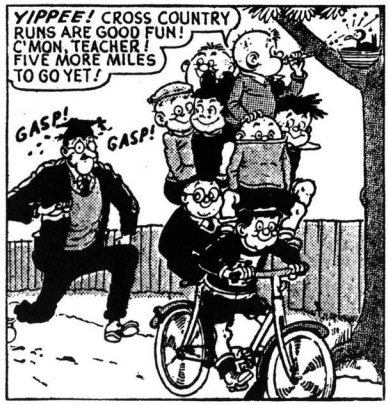
DAVY FRANCIS
Artist on 'Cowpat County' and others in *OINK!*

'Of the many influences on my work, the two most profound were the 1933 movie *King Kong* and the bizarre comic art of Ken Reid. Ken developed a keen sense for the twisted side of life, which prompted one Managing Editor at IPC in 1970 to comment on how much Reid's work "repulsed" him and how "that sort of thing would not be published in IPC humour comics." I had recently joined IPC as an office boy on *Buster* and I always felt Ken Reid was a fish out of water at IPC. His considerable talent was mismanaged and misunderstood. The maniacal "Frankie Stein" from the pages of *Wham!* fell into the hands of others who, while maintaining the character's popularity, cast him into the twee safe world of comics, that same world that Ken Reid worked so hard to demolish. However, he left a fine body of work and a fitting epitaph—"Aghhhh! It's 'IM!!"

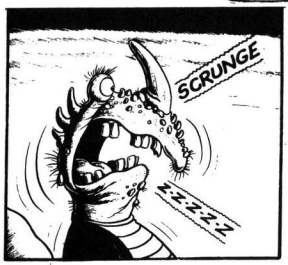
KEVIN O'NEILL
Artist on *Nemesis, Metalzoic* and *Marshall Law*.



LEFT: FATTY'S SYSTEM GRINDS TO A HALT FROM TOO MUCH STARCH IN THE NERVS FROM *SMASH!*
FAR LEFT: ONE OF THE WORLD-WIDE WEIRDIES FROM *WHOOPEE!*, 1974.



THE BASH STREET KIDS—DANNY, SMIFFY, SIDNEY, WILFRID, HERBERT, FATTY, TOOTS AND PLUG—ON THE RAMPAGE IN A 1957 *BEANO*.



LEFT: FACEACHE, THE BOY WITH A THOUSAND FACES, FROM *BUSTER*, CENTRE LEFT: A CLASSIC JONAH SEQUENCE FROM A 1958 *BEANO*.

BOYS



'I never met Ken Reid, but even so he had a profound influence on me through his work. When I received the sad news I was working on a 'Roger the Dodger' set, one of the many characters first drawn by Ken Reid that are still going strong today. His style and imagination were unique and as long as there are British comics, his influence will shine through.'

ROBERT NIXON
Current artist on 'Roger the Dodger'.

'More than just a great comic creator, Ken Reid was a great English fantasist, with a drawing style as accomplished as that of a Carl Barks or a Wally Wood. Reid created a fantasy world in his comic strips that had its own unique asylum atmosphere, where hilarity was dragged out to the point of gibbering dementia and the humour flirted shamelessly with the disturbing and the repulsive. In all the rich history of British children's comics, I can think of few artists who equal Reid in their technical skill, and none who match him for sheer inventiveness or originality of vision. British comics have lost one of their greatest and most seriously overlooked craftsmen. I regret never having penned this tribute while he was alive to read it.'

ALAN MOORE
Writer of *Watchmen*, *Halo Jones* and others.

'Of the handful of people who can make comedy in comics actually work, Ken Reid must come top of the list every time. He had a gentle, intricate penline which combined with his wacky sense of humour to give his characters a loopy look in their eyes that let you know immediately that they were all a brick short of a load. Like all humour artists, Ken Reid's work is underrated. Unlike most of us, he deserves the highest recognition. He had the magic.'

LEW STRINGER
Creator of *Brickman* and 'Tom Thugg'. ≡

Uninhibited guru of *The Beano* Spirit, Leo Baxendale is credited as 'the most influential and most imitated comics artist of modern times.' According to Alan Moore, growing up on *The Beano* explains why he and so many British comics creators have revitalised American comics. 'We started out ingesting the genuine anarchy of *The Beano*, when Baxendale was doing all that wonderful stuff, and moved on to American comics. We just became fascinated with all that gaudy exotica. But we approached those comics with a certain sensibility that home-grown US comic writers don't have.' Now Baxendale returns to comics after his seven year lawsuit, with a new book and plans aplenty.

THE COURT CASE

'In my case against Beano publishers DC Thomsons over the copyrights to my creations—Little Plum, Minnie the Minx, The Bash Street Kids, The Three Bears, The Banana Bunch—I was heading for a three week trial in the High Court from June 29th 1987. There were always several possible endings—like those role-playing books! But in the end we came to a mutually acceptable settlement in late May. I was fighting with Legal Aid and if anybody in that system is made a serious offer, it must be considered, because of the enormous costs to public money to go on fighting. The terms are confidential but I now have an amicable association with Thomsons.'

THRRP!

'Gilbert Shelton reprinted 'Spotty Dick' in *Rip Off Comix* and after it went down very well, Tony Bennett of Knockabout asked me to do a *Spotty Dick* book. In *Thrrp!* there's no dialogue, because then we can re-publish around the world. And I used easily recognisable plots, like Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Aesop's fable, 'The Tortoise and The Hare'. I didn't want a word for the title either, so I chose *Thrrp!*, the sound of blowing a full-blooded raspberry, like in *The Goon Show*—I can't do them myself!'

SPOTTY DICK

'I conceived Spotty Dick originally as a young lad who'd left school and kept losing jobs because he had a tiny brain and big feet. But as time went by and we had massive unemployment, it didn't seem right somehow! For *Thrrp!*, I'd been thinking about these inhabitants of Planet Urf, they're all conformists—not unlike our own Earth. And I realised how beautifully Spotty would fit into this, as he's a deviant—not that he does it on purpose, he's just too thick. He makes a lovely contrast, blundering through life, stumbling into plots. I love Spotty, I think of him almost as a child. Like Little Plum, he's quite complex, definitely not a hero, but not quite a loser either. Plum was a character that lightning always struck twice. But he was a survivor; even if he was a bit dim, he'd usually contrive that it was the others around him that got clobbered and not him!'

THE BEANO SPIRIT

'After *A Very Funny Business* in 1978, I got a fan letter from Alan Moore, who was just starting his career. He'd imagined pro's like me rattled off five pages before breakfast and was so relieved to read that I got tired and did stupid things because of lack of sleep, like everyone. Alan Moore, Steve Bell, Savage Pencil and others have taken the ethos of my work, *The Beano* Spirit, that uninhibited outlook, and they're carrying it on in their own work. I think that's wonderful.'

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

'I've drawn a Spotty Dick T-Shirt for Knockabout and my Baby Basil Wall Poster comes out next Easter. I'm finishing off a follow up to *Funny Business*, a 55,000 word auto-biography out by Spring '89. And I'm writing another book called *The Beano Tale* about the creation of my *Beano* characters.'

After seven years of copyright law and self-imposed exile from comics, no wonder Baxendale is bursting with new projects. Finally, he is in control of his career ≡

***The Dandy and The Beano: The First Fifty Years* is a 144-page full colour celebration with classic reprints, the secrets of how the comics are made, even the recipe for Desperate Dan's cow-pies! It's published by Thomsons on August 26th, price £4.95 from all UK bookshops.**


SAV'S WAX.
BLOODY TOOTHPASTE!
BY BOB LYNCH
what's the problem Darling Sav? Are we running out again?
Hiisss
BIP
We possess a sufficient bulk of the stuff, Kath My Love, but it refuses to keep on the toothbrush.
Eek!
Hmm... it was fine when I cleaned my toothy-pegs this evening, Sweet Sav, so it must be all your fault.
My fault? What do you mean by that?
I suppose I was too harsh there. Let me get my electroscope.
What are you on about?
I had a theory and have been working on experiments concerning the nature of balance.
You see, Sav Dearest, I've been working on the distribution of ear wax... hmm... this one's okay enough.
When the mass of wax in the ears fails to match it throws the head, and also the body off balance. Aha!
There is a large build-up of solidified wax in your left ear. When it gets to that state it is beyond normal methods of clearance.


So what can be done, Kath My Heart's Desire? I can't go to the party with grubby teeth and a wobbly walk.
TUT!
TUT!
Well, Sav Me Old Love, I've just invented the Solidified Wax Disintergration Ray. But it also destroys brain-cells.
I tried it on Billy S. Hayte and the resulting damage led to his posting as Minister for Overseas Development.
Let them eat Geldof.
We have to do something, I can feel my control falling away, taking my life and dreams with it. Help me!
Shame
Good tidings, Sav Sweetest, I've developed the Variable Mass Ear Pendant Unit.
By twisting this knob I can alter the weight to match that of the wax. Thus your balance regains its true state of equilibrium.
Oooh
Good Lord, it works. I can clean my molars and dance the Double Dabble both at the same time.
I love you Kath. Kissy-kissy?
Kissy-kissy.
Meanwhile, inside Sav's ear...
Curses!! Foiled by the artist's sentimental sensibilities!



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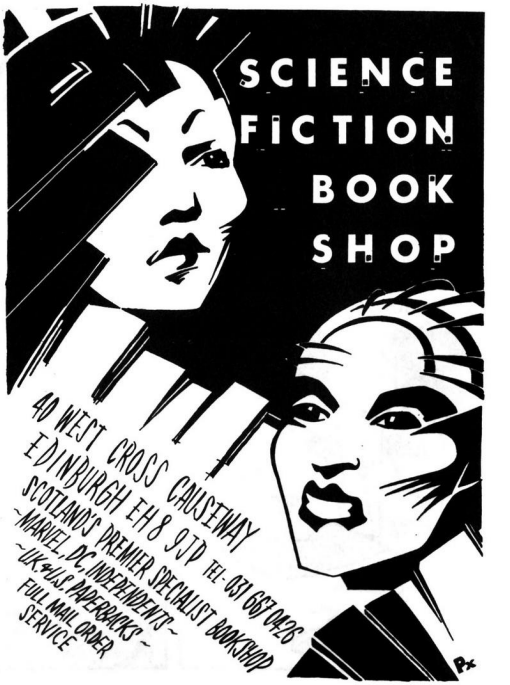
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UPON A STAR

Moebius

First, the good news. In their best move for several light-years, the Marvel Group have brought out *Upon A Star*, the first in a projected series of six Collected Fantasies of Jean 'Moebius' Giraud. It contains the title piece, a thirty-nine page story commissioned by Citroën, and three other short tales, along with a biographical slice and several pages of explanatory text by Moebius himself. But it mystifies and disappoints me that these stories should be chosen as the first Moebius to appear in this series, for they are two or three kilometres short of his best work. Of the short stories: 'Celestial Venice' looks hurried and muffled by over-emphatic colour; 'The Repairmen', a sort of preface, is better but detached; whilst 'Aedena' could be the work of somebody else entirely. I've revisited its pages sniffing around for Moebius' spoor but the trail is cold.

'Upon A Star' deserves closer attention. The author explains in an afterword that he was attempting to simplify his style and to overcome 'one of my problems, which is to compensate for any imprecisions in my work, or any limpness in style, by sheer accumulation of details'. The details that he has erased, considering them 'endless and neurotic', have always seemed to me infinitely and effortlessly varied, but also consistently relevant and telling, the oxygen in the unique Moebius atmosphere. He's discarded all that, and he's breathing easier than I am. Gone too is all the textural hatching that can give the line-work of even his most outlandish inventions a tactile, recognisable quality.

Having had my grouse, I must also say that I have never found anything by Moebius that doesn't contain something astonishing and beautiful. In 'Upon A Star' there is a spread where a meteor crash lands on a desert plane. Flying in formation, as it were, we see the impact before peeling away and back up into the sky while below us on the desert floor the dust cloud slowly forms. In these few frames, a sequence that is both poetic and exact, Moebius has drawn SILENCE. It is the work of a master.

So that's *Upon A Star*—a disappointing collection, with flashes of brilliance. But there are riches ahead in the series. The second, *Arzach,* is stuffed with top flight Moebius, while the third, *The Airtight Garage,* a prism of drawing styles, has some of his finest work. With good English translation we will get even further inside his head ≡

Alastair Graham

Marvel Entertainment Group/Epic Graphic Novel 76 pp $9.95/£6.95 Import



COVER TO ARZACH, 'STUFFED WITH TOP-FLIGHT MOEBIUS'

THE KRYPTON FACTOR

Is Superman Byrne-ing up in the stratosphere?



SUPERMAN

John Byrne

In the dark days before *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, DC Comics had a problem. Their market share was diminishing year after year and they were stuck with a stable of moribund Stars which nobody could do anything with. *Superman, Batman* and *Wonder Woman* were no longer the million sellers they used to be and Marvel was Teen–Mutating the entire kid population of North America. What to do? Go for the hard sell. The Big Three had to be redesigned and relaunched along with the rest of the line, made into Eighties type heroes to grab a new readership. The man chosen to wipe out years of Red Kryptonite, Super-Pets and stale Super-Plots was none other than Mr Teen Mutant co-architect himself, John Byrne, whose stints on *X-Men, Alpha Flight* and *Fantastic Four* at Marvel Comics had pushed those titles into the stratosphere.

Byrne's task on *Superman* was to redesign him from the ground up—to find the essential elements that had made him a success in the beginning and return to and build on these. A fine idea; Frank Miller had done the same thing very successfully with *Daredevil* and was doing it with *Dark Knight* and *Batman—Year One,* while Alan Moore had done much the same thing with *Swamp Thing* a while earlier.

So John Byrne re-presented Superman to us in a six-part mini-series, *Man of Steel,* and took over *Action* and *Superman.* As you might have expected, a happy DC once again with Mega-success saleswise. But storywise? Not such good news. What we seem left with now is not *Superman,* but a version of *Superman*—SuperByrneMan, you might say.

Consider: no more Fortress of Solitude, no more shining cities of Krypton, no more Argo City, no more Superboy or Krypto, no more Phantom Zone, no more Bizarro #1. Lex Luthor has traded in his battlesuit for a grey flannel Kingpin-type number. SuperByrneMan and Batman dislike each other intensely. SuperByrneMan himself is an altogether tougher cookie—younger, flashier, pushier, rather more conservative, Republican even. His original creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster would probably walk past him in the street and wonder where he got the costume.

The problem is, if Frank Miller has the aggressive romance of, say, Norman Mailer and Alan Moore has the semiotic layered trickiness of, say, Thomas Pynchon, then John Byrne resembles no writer so much as Judith Krantz. The surfaces are there, but the concentration is on the peripheries. Characters are defined by what they wear and where they shop and backgrounds don't mean anything, they're just accumulated detail that adds up to a credit rating.

Byrne concentrates on the wrong aspects of what makes Superman interesting; it was never his powers or his enemies or his settings, as much as his internal workings and his history. As with any character really. Change the history and you change the character, even if you use the same plots. Superman has always had a tragic element; he was the last survivor of Krypton, a wonderful magical fascinating place that he was homesick for but could never return to because it was gone. As much as The Fortress of Solitude was a reminder of that, it was a refuge too, a Kryptonian home-from-home. He was stuck on Earth and although he looked human he could never be one, though he could pretend.

That is why Clark Kent was mild in manner: because it was light relief, because it was nice to fit in and be opposite to Superman, who can do or be anything, except be 'One of the Boys'—like Clark. As the Byrne-recreated yuppie go-getter though, Kent gets all the hot stories, writes best-sellers and the ladies love him. Why bother taking off the disguise at all?

Summary: Wow! Dumb Ol' Krypton blows up! But He gets away! Whew! He lands on this planet and what do you know? He can fly! He's faster than a you-know-what! He's the hottest thing on Earth since summer–time! What a break! Yeah!

In that context, SuperByrneMan's rationalisations for being a force for good seem rather less like Duty and more like Self-Aggrandisement. That's really it—without the burden of his past, SuperByrneMan is just as smug as any yuppie-come-lately. No compulsion to protect Earth, his new home, from disasters the way he couldn't save his old one, Krypton. Just—Power; and what is there to do with it but flaunt it over folks who don't have any? In the nicest possible way of course. No wonder he and Batman don't get along. They no longer have anything in common, Superman might have been a Kryptonian before, but he's an alien now ≡

Trevs Phoenix

DC Comics Monthly Colour Comic, 75 cents/40 pence from most newstands.


KRAZY KAT
Registered U. S. Patent Office
SO... A STRANGER HEH ??
FFFFF
OF COURSE, YOU CAN TELL WHO I AM - EH? - THE POLICE FORCE - THE CONSTABULARY - LAW, ORDER - THAT'S ME - OFFICER PUPP
DLDD
I CAN SEE BY THE LOOK IN YOUR EYE THAT YOU'D LIKE TO VISIT AROUND, AND TAKE IN THE SIGHTS - IS AT THAT RIGHT ?
ZIJJ
GOOD, LET'S GET GOING - THERE'S A HEAP TO SEE
OONN
TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THIS HANDSOME PERSON APPROACHING
QQS
COCONINO COUNTY'S PERFECT PERSON - OUR SUPER SOCIALITE - FASHION'S FAVORITE - KRAZY KAT -
HMMM - A STRANGER IN OUR MIST.
FMF
VERY VERRA STRANGE
A BIG HEART A SWEET SOUL
GNX
A FLOWER'S SPIRIT - DREAM FABRIC -
TTTN
WHO CARES
AND THEN - THERE'S OUR THORN OUR ACHE, OUR PAIN OUR SMUDGE - PARDON MY BLUSH, STRANGER - THE VERY THOUGHT OF THAT RASCAL CHOKES ME -
JP
I MEAN NONE OTHER THAN IGNATZ MOUSE - WHO MAKES EVIL THE DAY BY TOSSING BRICKS AT THAT DEAR KAT -
HCB
AND YOU SELL HIM THOSE BRICKS - DON'T YOU MR. KOLIN KELLY -
WHO, ME ?
BLFU
AND NOW STRANGER - I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING -
YMTT
HE FRAMED ME -
JAIL
HERRIMAN
TM King Feature Syndicate, Inc., Great Britain rights reserved

THE 'NAM

Doug Murray and Michael Golden

The 'Nam's sincerity and authenticity are above question and I can't rate it too highly for these qualities, especially as research is all too often a dirty word for comic writers and artists. But there are many aspects of the story that I found very disturbing: the portrayal of the Vietcong (or 'Charlie' as the writer still calls them in his factual asides) as whores, muggers, sinister grinning little yellow men and 'cowards at work'; the quick 'clean' images of the napalming of a village with no close views of the human misery, in contrast to dwelling on the enormous suffering of the American 'grunts'; the exciting typical war covers; and the tone of the letters page with its title 'Incoming' and asides to readers like, 'Okay, all you grunts in training...'

'In training...'—that says it all. For all its sincerity, *The 'Nam* is glamourising war and in a more insidious way than the clearly gung-ho *Rambo* and *Green Berets. The 'Nam* uses the same techniques as war movies like *The Longest Day.* War is hell, but it's exciting and just. Humour, action and technical detail take precedence over morality.

I watched *The Longest Day* as a kid and thought it was great. That's why I believe *The 'Nam* is insidious, especially when it's hailed by critics as 'illustrating the horrors of war'. Not so. The acid test of a true anti-war story is: 'Does it make you feel sick?; Does it make you want to be there? If the answer to the first question is 'yes' and the second 'no', it's an anti-war story alright.



FROM 'LANDSCAPE' BY ARCHIE GOODWIN & JOE ORLANDO, 1965

A genuine anti-war strip is Archie Goodwin's heart-rending 'Landscape' drawn by Joe Orlando, showing a series of Invaders—including the Americans—despoiling a dignified human-looking Vietnamese peasant's land and ultimately shooting him by mistake. 'Landscape' is all the more heart-rending because it was published in 1965. How does that compare with *The 'Nam* being 'daring' in telling-it-like-it-is in 1987?

The 'Nam's glorification of what the 'grunts' went through isn't harmless either, with the United States still regarding the Pacific as 'The American Lake' and the possibility of a new Vietnam in Central America. Reading *The 'Nam,* a new generation of potential cannon-fodder might think only 'Charlie' commits atrocities. 'How could anyone human do this?' questions a 'grunt' at the sight of a VC torture (shown on the cover for good measure). We never hear about the American atrocities: the necklaces of ears; the rapes, murders and mutilations of Vietnamese women. When there is any questioning, it's the fault of the French, never the Americans. 'You Americans wanted to help'. Yeah, you had a better propaganda machine than the French and *The 'Nam* is doing its bit to spread the propaganda to a new generation.

The fact that it's taken from a soldier's point of view without benefit of hindsight or that they daren't get 'too strong' or they'll break the Comics Code are no excuse. A book titled *The 'Nam* by Mark Baker, 'The war recorded in the words of its veterans', gives wide coverage to anti-war incidents which could have been featured. Another book, *The Case of the Fort Jackson 8—GI's speak out against the war* by Fred Halstead, also suggests there was questioning and resistance even that early in the war. None of this comes through in the comic. Maybe the writer (a born again conservative) thinks it would be anti-patriotic. I'd say *The Fort Jackson 8,* serving GI's not armchair liberals, were very patriotic.

Because it could be confused with genuinely anti-war comics, I disliked *The 'Nam* intensely. Maybe later issues will show another side to the conflict—but there's a lot of damage to undo ≡

Pat Mills

Marvel Comics 75 cents/55 pence Import Monthly colour 32pp comic.

CANNON FODDER

The US propaganda machine seduces a new generation



THE BEST OF H.M. BATEMAN

We haven't had that many great cartoonists in the world, let alone in Britain, but H.M. Bateman was one of them. This new volume is a splendid collection featuring the colour paintings he did for *Tatler* magazine from 1922-26. If anyone ever remembers Bateman at all, it's for the series of 'The Man who' drawings, many of which appear here. In each instance, Bateman portrays a maladroit, ignorant outsider, placed at an upper-class occasion, committing a horrible social gaffe. Most viewers take these drawings at face value, as literal attacks on the people portrayed, and see them as malevolent social satire, sending up the ranks of pompous upper-class twits and exposing the latent hypocrisy of British class structure. That's a valid enough appraisal, but it only tells half the story. Such a view reduces Bateman to a mere period humourist, reading his drawings as burlesques, broad satirical sweeps on a particular era of British society, and implying that they're of little relevance today.

Of course that isn't true. Bateman was a genius and I believe he was commenting on the human condition, as all great artists do. If you examine all of his work, not simply the well-known pieces, you begin to see the unifying aspect. It is, quite simply, an extreme paranoia, and it's lurking behind every drawing he made, in complete contrast to the apparent jollity. Look at 'The Admission' and I defy you to remain unmoved. Is it simply a jolly period portrait of buffoons, a lampoon of social mores? No—it's a nightmare of paranoia come true, and a very unpleasant aspect of human nature made into a vivid work of art. No other artist has come close to rendering this overpowering feeling of humiliation, disgrace, embarrassment and shame.

In Bateman's pictures onlookers are transformed into monsters, expressing violent outrage, shock and impotent fury. Spirits of law and order appear among the clouds, embodying the ghosts of past traditions upset. Even the very architecture of famous establishments is set wobbling in revolt. And in the midst of all this stands the Outsider, literally shrunk to miniscule proportions by his utter sense of misplacement. All the devices Bateman employs are there to amplify and emphasise this central theme—the non-conformist alienated in society.

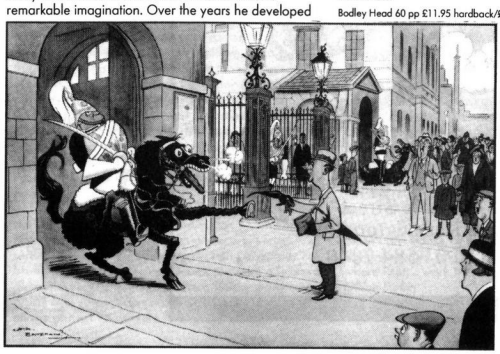
Because this is exactly what Bateman was himself. He was deeply uncomfortable in society and it shows in much of his work. He was also a miserable family man, unable to completely express emotion and often quarrelling with his wife and children. Sadly this too shows in some of his more intimate drawings. It's this underlying pain and sorrow that undetscores Bateman's best pieces, and is often overlooked amongst all the hilarity.

But let's not forget these drawings *are* hilarious and many of them are also a testament to Bateman's remarkable imagination. Over the years he developed his unique ability to 'go mad on paper' as he called it. I'd like you to look carefully at all the paintings which feature animals in this book: the uncanny dancing horses in 'The Favourite wins'; and the Lifeguardsman's horse in 'Very well meant', transformed into nothing short of a terrified snorting dragon. Genius.

This book ties in with a major retrospective show at the South Bank in London. When I went, I was in awe of Bateman's taut confident line, impeccable draughtsmanship and expressionistic colour effects. None of Bateman's books have ever been reprinted by Methuen, much to their discredit; and this is the first time the *Tatler* paintings have ever appeared together. So either way, this book is completely indispensable ≡

Ed Pinsent

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'VERY WELL MEANT' BY H.M. BATEMAN



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NERVOUS REX

William Van Horn

Nowadays you can't walk through a comic shop without seeing all manner of once docile creatures taking up arms, blasting, slashing and kicking their way through the racks. These animals, once considered to be the consumed portion of the food chain, allow their creators' violent fantasies to carve foul paths into the sick depths of our innermost souls. Ye Gods! If they can produce this grim horror with cute fluffy hamsters, what grim obscenities will be committed using a Tyrannosaurus Rex, the most savage creature ever?

Well for a start, he only eats oatmeal, he's undersized and very nervous. His wife, Dearie, is rather annoyed about having a small timid husband, so she harrangs him something rotten. Now there will be many of you out there who will think that all this adds up to a rather insipid little comic. I, being a man of liberal inclinations, respect your right to these views. For it is these differences that make us individuals. But it must be said...ahem...

You're wrong buster! William Van Horn, all-seeing all-knowing creator of *Nervous Rex*, weaves words and ink with energetic ingenuity. When elements clash and objects hurtle, they clash and hurtle with a force usually reserved for costumed crusaders. Characters pose and dart with the expressive body language of a silent actor. And then there are the plots...

Wacky? You want wacky? I'll give you wacky. A snail roams prehistoric America, snarling with all the savage fury of a reincarnated T. Rex (which it is!) Nervous is given a telescope which actually causes objects to move closer or further away. Nervous dresses up as a fly to frighten Dearie. Nervous and chums go in search of a plot. And, in his first book-length story, Nervous lands in present-day Hollywood. Yep, it's a wild'n'crazy kinda world back in Prehistoricland. But in the middle of these crazy capers is sweet little Nervous, someone who is too timid to stand up and be counted. My kinda guy ☰

Bob Lynch

Blackthorne Comics $2.00/£1.50 Import comic book from comic shops.



HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

Vittorio Giardino

Graham Greene, John Le Carré, Eric Ambler and many others fill the 'spy fiction' section in bookshops, but, surprisingly, hardly anybody is even attempting the complex mechanism of a spy story in comics. The Italian Vittorio Giardino is the outstanding exception. After ten years working as an engineer, he switched to comics and applies the same precision and logic to his tales of espionnage, fine-tuning the narrative and drawing every detail as meticulously as Hergé. In the lead role is Max Friedman, a quiet ginger-bearded pipe-smoking Frenchman, who now lives in Geneva. More of a reluctant pawn than a James Bond type, he is forced out of retirement in the winter of 1938 by the French Secret Service and sent to mysterious Budapest to investigate the murder of their agents. Ironically, by remaining suspicious of everyone, the amateur Friedman manages to outwit the professionals on both sides, but his mission turns out to be a futile red herring. In the end all he has achieved is coming out of it alive. Giardino's English-language debut, marred only by some clumsy gaffes in the translation introduces a mature fragile 'hero', an involving character who deserves to join his literary counterparts on your bookshelves ☰

Paul Gravett

Catalan Communications $12.95/£8.95 96pp
Import Full Colour Paperback

HIGH-WATER MARK

Corto Maltese adrift on the salty deep



FROM CORTO'S IRISH ADVENTURE IN A MID-WINTER MORNING'S DREAM

CORTO MALTESE

Hugo Pratt

Just like there will never be enough love stories, I guess people will never get tired of adventure tales and anyone with a sense of adventure will enjoy *Corto Maltese*.

When I first discovered this comic, aware of its popularity, I was looking for its original qualities, the special ingredients which make it so widely liked. This is, after all, one of the few strips which has made the cross-over from the comic fan to the man-in-the-street, significantly chosen by the French publishers J'ai Lu for their new mass market paperback series.

But the more I read of *Corto Maltese,* the more I felt its strength is not in originality but in old-fashioned ingredients. What we normally find is a simple adventure story with a small cast of characters taking place against a gloriously broad canvas of exotic locations, littered with treasure maps, myths and local skirmishes. It is the genuine enthusiasm, relish and understanding with which Pratt invests his work that give the strip its real kick.

Maltese himself is a likeable unpredictable soul, a 'gentleman of fortune' who seems at home in any situation. He is respected by the bad guys for his handiness in a pinch and his nose for treasure. The good guys allow him a certain freedom, because in the course of his activities he tends to weed out some of the more nauseous rats of the underworld. It is an attractive feature of Corto's characterisation that he is respected by both good and bad alike for his candid nature and reliability. Maltese is a romantic, purveyor of sound advice, impatient of the mundane and the negative. As we follow his trail, it is Hugo Pratt's love of his subject which pulls us along so powerfully.

Pratt's drawing changes and evolves continually. His first Maltese adventure, *The Ballad of the Salty Sea,* rightly considered his masterpiece, is very sensitively drawn—impressionistic with beautifully brushed-in blacks. He never seems to reach a finished definitive version of his characters. Unlike many comic artists who strive for an instantly recognised Letraset image of their characters, Pratt seems to be ever-searching for a better drawing. In *The Ballad*...Pratt seeks after the girl Pandora in panel after panel, discovering new moods, capturing changes from vulnerability to determination, her hair blowing and her thoughtful eyes.

There is a mature and serious tone to *Corto Maltese* which sets it above other stories in this medium. It has an intelligent atmosphere, and while it drifts through sinister or bloodthirsty phases, it remains buoyant, encouraging the reader to be big-hearted and philosophical, not getting lost in moralising or sentimentality. It is romantic but somehow practical at the same time.

One of its most endearing figures is Rasputin. This ardent villain is a familiar companion for Maltese. With few redeeming features, this bearded rogue romps around the globe on the wings of coincidence, chasing new adventures and looking for new opportunities to kill people and cause havoc. His loyalty to Corto is quite touching (despite frequent threats to kill him) and his warped sense of humour delightful.

In recent years Pratt has become more interested in the graphic qualities of his work; stylised images replace the earlier suggestion and impressionism. But because Pratt is following his own enthusiasms, the sense of enjoyment remains. The pages aren't always as rich in detail and sensitive touches as in previous years, but they have a bright graphic excitement, a boldness, a song-like quality.

Recently NBM have published four *Corto Maltese* titles in English: 1: *The Brazilian Eagle;* 2: *Banana Conga;* 3: *Voodoo for the President;* 4: *A Mid-Winter Morning's Dream.* I would also recommend anyone interested in these to look out for the longer French Casterman editions still to come from NBM, in which readers really have a chance to lose themselves. The epic quality of Pratt's meandering stories is their real strength. So far, in the shorter complete tales in NBM's first books, one is merely paddling in the shallow waters, and not yet adrift in the bigger sea where Pratt's work truly comes to life ☰

Glenn Dakin

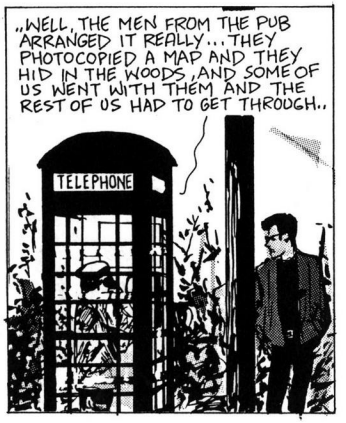
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LOOK OUT, JEREMY SHOOT!!
BOOF
AAAAAAA
SHAVE
foam
THAT SPRAY WAS SCENTED!!
YOU BASTARD
COME ON NOW. LETS HAVE YOUR TICKETS

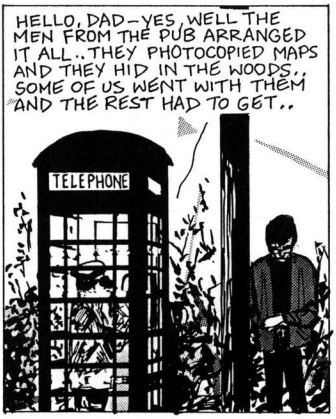

TICKETS PLEASE
It was scented
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE
SCENTED STINGS.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO THROW IT IN THE OTHER FIELD — THAT COST ME 80p
MANNY?
FOR GOD'S SAKE — IT ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS.
THERE'S PANDEMONIUM AT THE STREAM.. AS FOR THE SECOND WAVE — THEY'VE GONE IN THE WRONG DIRECTION
Wish Penny and I hadn't had that fight today
MIGHT AS WELL GO TO THE RENDEZVOUS POINT -- BETTER UNTIE THE WIRE FIRST, HAN -
— WAIT — FOOTSTEPS
GAAA
suburban guerillas.

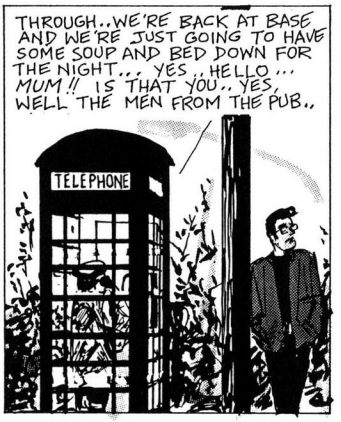

MUST PHONE PENNY


IT'S BEEN REALLY GOOD SO FAR—WE STAGED A BATTLE MANOEUVRE TONIGHT —

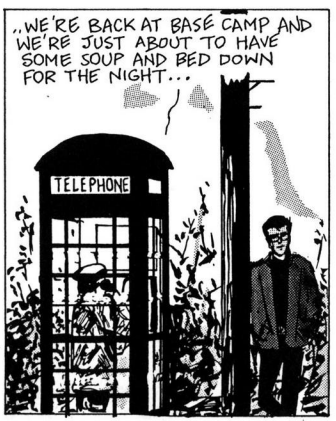

„WELL, THE MEN FROM THE PUB ARRANGED IT REALLY... THEY PHOTOCOPIED A MAP AND THEY HID IN THE WOODS, AND SOME OF US WENT WITH THEM AND THE REST OF US HAD TO GET THROUGH..
TELEPHONE


„TO REACH THE MOUND ON THE HILL ... WE'RE BACK AT BASE NOW AND WE'RE JUST ABOUT TO HAVE SOME SOUP AND BED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT.. YES.. UH, DAD? — YES, PUT HIM ON..
TELEPHONE


HELLO, DAD — YES, WELL THE MEN FROM THE PUB ARRANGED IT ALL.. THEY PHOTOCOPIED MAPS AND THEY HID IN THE WOODS.. SOME OF US WENT WITH THEM AND THE REST HAD TO GET..
TELEPHONE

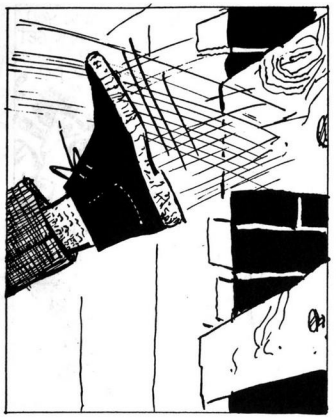

THROUGH.. WE'RE BACK AT BASE AND WE'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE SOME SOUP AND BED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT... YES.. HELLO... MUM!! IS THAT YOU.. YES, WELL THE MEN FROM THE PUB..
TELEPHONE


THEY HID IN THE WOODS AND THE REST OF US HAD TO GET THROUGH... NO.. IT WASN'T DANGEROUS..
TELEPHONE


„WE'RE BACK AT BASE CAMP AND WE'RE JUST ABOUT TO HAVE SOME SOUP AND BED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT...
TELEPHONE

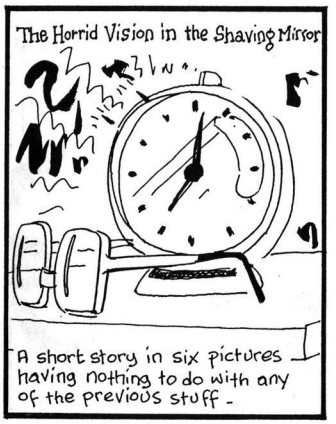

EH? ... UM ... OXTAIL.
TELEPHONE


IT WAS LOUISE'S UNCLE ART — HE COMES CAMPING EVERY EASTER WITH HIS AIR CADET TROOP — ...OR SPACE APPRENTICES AS LOUISE CALLS THEM
HOW DID IT GO?
DANNY WAS REALLY INTO IT! I THINK THAT MAN MISSED HIS CALLING ... I ALWAYS FEEL AN AIR OF SUPPRESSED VIOLENCE ABOUT HIM... HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A WAR-HERO OR SOMETHING —
ALEC! HAVE YOU GOT CLOTHES ON?
PAULINE! NOW YOU GO UPSTAIRS AND GET DRESSED AND I'LL COME UP AND DO YOUR HAIR!!
SO WHAT HAVE YOU GOT LINED UP FOR TODAY?
WELL, JOHN- ALEC'S GOING TO HELP ME MEND SOME FENCING AT THE STABLES —
WHO?
ALEC
HA HA HA HA HA
FIRST WE'VE GOT TO CLEAR THIS DOORWAY
YOU'LL NEVER DO IT LIKE THAT!
STAND BACK.



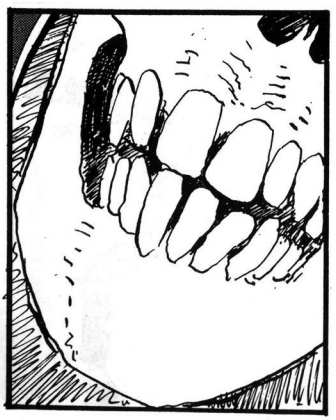

Action Man
I don't believe it

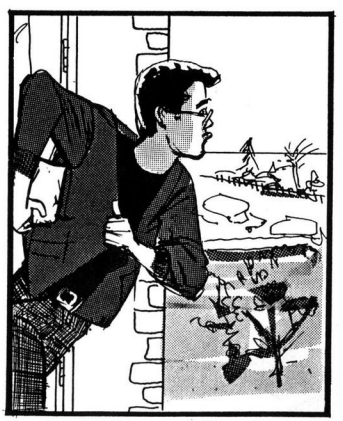



The Horrid Vision in the Shaving Mirror
A short story in six pictures having nothing to do with any of the previous stuff -










G'Morning
G'Morning

end

LORENZO MATTOTTI

'In everyday life we are always resisting the need for calm and contemplation and the attraction of the mysterious, the unknown, of losing ourselves in them.'

LORENZO MATTOTTI is Italy's grand architect of dreams. He spent his formative years, however, very much as a realist. Born in Brescia in Northern Italy in 1954, he studied architecture before entering comics in the late Seventies. His teacher José Muñoz, featured last issue, inspired him to reflect the real world in his strips, and he began with several noisy urban stories about football fans and disaffected Milanese youths. 'When I was young, José Muñoz taught me that my work must connect with my experience of life. For a long time I thought I could do something very similar to Muñoz and Sampayo's work. So I created comics about what was outside me, the situation I was living in, dealing with politics, students, reality.

'But then I understood that for me there was another way, much closer to me and my obsessions.' With other young like-minded artists, Mattotti began experimenting in short-lived anthologies like *Nemo* and *Il Pinguino* in 1980. This led to their uniting as the revolutionary Valvoline group, to stake out unexplored frontiers of progressive fumetti. 'At the beginning we were full of enthusiasm and had a lot of freedom. We were more in touch with each other then and discussed our ideas. Today we are less of a group and more individual authors. But we all want to explore new ideas—it would be boring otherwise. We are not professionals, we are very dilettante. Every story is still a discovery'.

Mattotti's discovery of 'another way' for his comics came through his second teacher, Italian painter-turned-cartoonist and theorist, Renato Calligaro. 'He told me, "It is possible to be poetic in comics, to find something deeper." He is an idealist, he accepts no compromise, so his strips are very difficult to understand. I was more influenced by his ideas than his work. We spoke about George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*, the changes in atmosphere, the characters' inner feelings being reflected in the setting. How you can change the sentiments by colour, by technique, by drawing style.'

The explosion came in *Il Signor Spartaco* (1982). For the first time Mattotti wrote his own story and flooded it with dazzling electric colours. 'I was discovering things, being inspired by German Expressionism, and films like *The Cabinet of Dr Calligari*, using them to convey the confusion the character Spartaco feels about his memories and his identity.' Asleep on a train journey to his aunt's, Spartaco dreams of his childhood fears and anxieties and the deeper he slips into his slumberland, the more these phantom puppeteers manipulate his hold on reality.

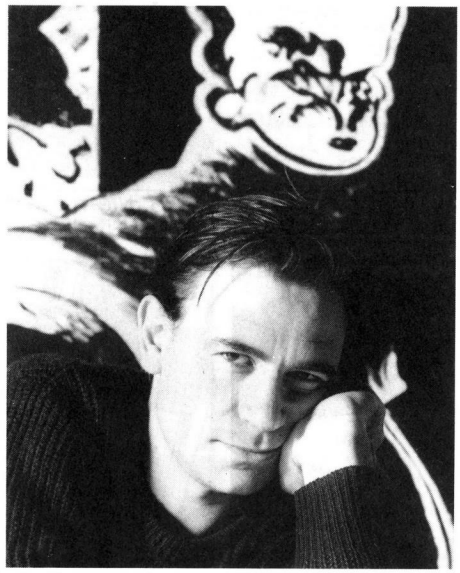


PHOTO: MAURO BALDRATI

Spartaco is an urban story in which the landscape of the mind conceals nightmarish phantasms; the terrain of *Fuochi (Fires)*, Mattotti's masterpiece, is totally different. 'I had not felt able to convey nature in my work before, but I did not want to make another story closed in by the city, that would be easy. I wanted to communicate my fascination for light, for nature. When you see a film by Tarkovsky or Herzog—the green, the leaves, the clouds, you can't believe it. How can you explain these things in a comic? Is it possible? That was the challenge.'

Fires is the triumph. It tells the story of a young naval officer, Lieutenant Absinthe, who becomes entranced by a magical island and its strange inhabitants and deserts his ship and crew to save his paradise from destruction. The story climaxes in a furious expressionist inferno. *Fires* can be read on several levels: as an account or a dream of a possession; as an ecological battle between the warship and the island; and as a spiritual allegory contrasting industrialised man with primitive nature. 'When I look out at the world, I see too much tension, it's terrible. In everyday life we are always resisting the need for calm and contemplation and the attraction of the mysterious, the unknown, of losing ourselves in them. Bonnard for me is one of the masters who gave me this sense of contemplation; we are always so troubled that we are not able to find it. I was also influenced by the songs of Peter Gabriel, Brian Eno, Cocteau Twins, the soundtrack of *Apocalypse Now*; I wanted to bring in these moods into my story.' Also inspired by film-makers like Eisenstein and Fritz Lang and painters like Hopper and Valloton, Mattotti's rich imagery introduces sensations and depths of emotion new to comics—a breath of wind, the heat of fire, the freshness of woodland, feelings of tribalism, melancholy and peace. *Fires* proves it is possible.

Mattotti is versatile and incredibly productive; as well as his own comics such as the following story 'Insomnia', he has drawn stories for children, illustrated videos, designed theatre sets, carpets and fashion. For a week he drew news stories in strip form for a Bologna newspaper, based on subtly bizarre clippings, 'small simple stories that hint at other things' (one of these appeared in *Raw* 8). With the other Valvoline artists he contributed to a section on the miners' strike in *The Face* (No.62) and painted huge pictures for a Memphis exhibition in Milan. His beautiful fashion illustrations for the Italian magazine *Vanity* have secured him a major section in Thames & Hudson's forthcoming survey, *Fashion Illustration Today*, edited by Nicholas Drake.

Drake writes: 'Mattotti's highly finished oil-pastel technique is a classical contrast to the bizarre characters and surreal *mises-en-scène* depicted in his illustrations.... He believes that being an outsider as regards the fashion world has given him "a sort of virginity that frees me from restrictive schemes."

His fashion work is now leading him back to comics. 'I think it has helped me become more descriptive and mannerist, less violent, with more control of atmosphere.' He is planning his next album. 'I want to do a story of love about a woman, not of this time, but during the Italian Risorgimento war from 1848. I am not interested in the history, but in the environment, the colours, from looking at paintings of this period, and in the artificial atmosphere of melodrama, the theatre. I'm not sure of the story yet, but I have some symbolistic images. I am very interested in the Austrian writer Holenia, who wrote some very strange books about the Second World War, in which you don't know where reality begins and ends.' Mattotti is building another dream ≡

Paul Gravett

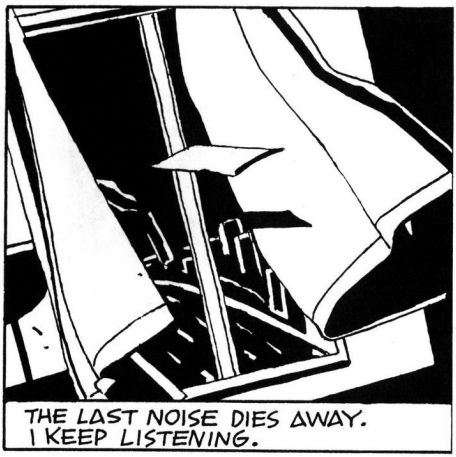
The English translation of *Fires* is planned for summer '88 from Catalan Communications and Titan Books. Thames & Hudson's *Fashion Illustration Today* is out in November '87.

ONE DAY MEN WILL REALISE THAT THEY HAVEN'T ALWAYS SLEPT. GOD DOESN'T SLEEP. ADAM DIDN'T SLEEP EITHER. POTIONS DON'T MAKE YOU SLEEP, NOR SLEEPING PILLS. THE ELEPHANT SLEEPS FOR TWO HOURS, THE DOG WHEN IT CAN. I NEED SAY NO MORE. ~~ MAN SLEEPS TO FORGET HIS SINS; AND EVERY DAY HE SLEEPS A BIT MORE, AS HE GOES ON CONQUERING THE NIGHT. I NEED SAY NO MORE.
THE DEAD DON'T SLEEP. NOR DO I. ANYONE WHO SLEEPS MUST BE KILLED.
-MAX AUB (Exemplary Crimes)

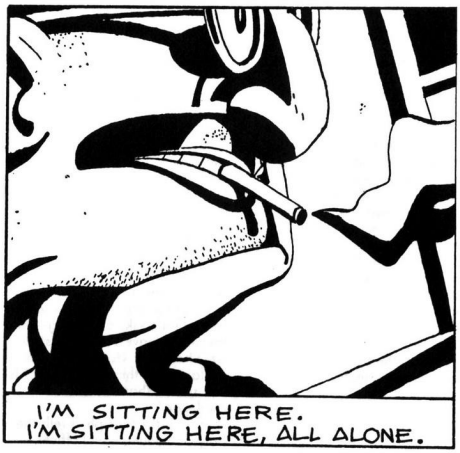
INSOMNIA











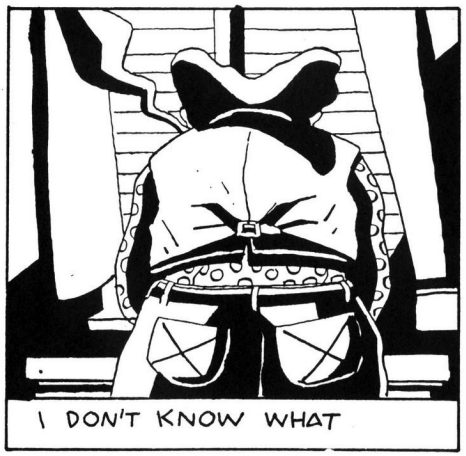
TRANSLATION BY LILIA AMBROSI. LETTERING BY TREVS PHOENIX.


STOP, GNAT. KEEP ME COMPANY FOR A WHILE.


GREY SMOKE, STAY. DON'T FLY AWAY.


FOAM, SWIM IN MY GLASS. DON'T STOP.

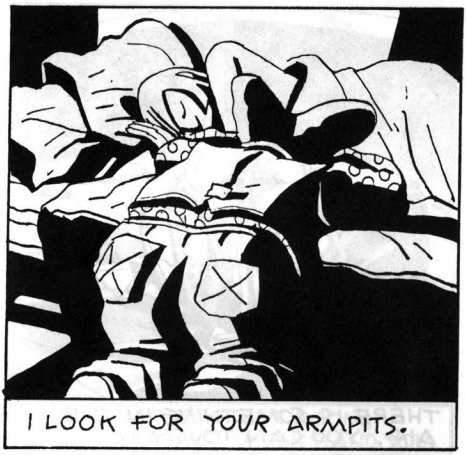

THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE AIR. YOU CAN TOUCH IT.


I DON'T KNOW WHAT


I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M WAITING FOR.


I GO BACK TO BED, BACK TO YOUR SIDE.


I LIGHTLY TOUCH YOUR SKIN, I HUDDLE NEXT TO YOU.


I LOOK FOR YOUR ARMPITS.


YOU SLEEP AND YOUR LIPS ARE ALMOST OPEN. I CAN FEEL YOUR BREATH.


I LOOK IN THE SHEETS FOR YOUR KNEES.


I CARESS, I CARESS YOUR CELLULITE.


AND SLEEP, SLEEP, SLEEP
TAKE ME AWAY WITH YOU
AND SLEEP, SLEEP, SLEEP, DEAR FRIEND
TAKE ME WITH YOU
AND TOWARD THE NEW DAY,
I WILL WALK WITH YOU.
I WILL WALK WITH YOU,
INTO A NEW DREAM.

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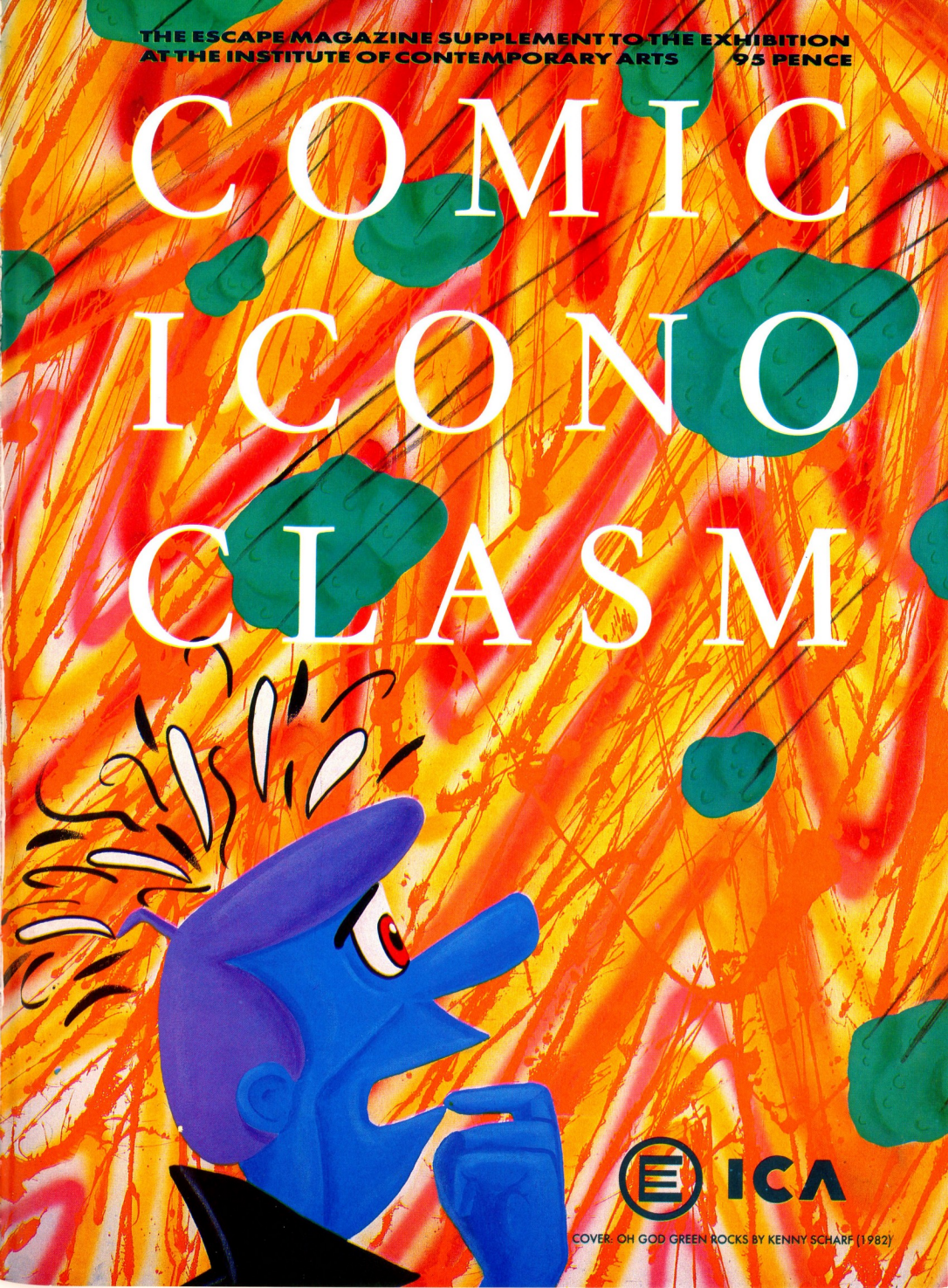
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THE PRINCIPALITY OF LICHTENSTEIN

AFTER MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS OF FINE ARTISTS' IRONIC AND-OR ICONIC QUOTATION OF 'KID' KULTURE, FROM PICASSO AND POP ART TO THE HAIRY WHO AND HARING, PAUL GRAVETT CONSIDERS WHERE THIS STRIP-LIFTING IS LEADING.

ROY LICHTENSTEIN must have appreciated the irony of magnifying on his projector a panel of a cornered crook from a science fiction comic and painting it in his 1963 canvas, *Image Duplicator*. At that time, he was being panned as a 'villain' by art critics, who complained that his paintings were copies, totally lacking in originality. Several comic artists also objected to his copying; one of them, on recognising a panel of his as a source for a painting, threatened to sue.

But Lichtenstein's blow-ups followed on from the work of many other painters and artists, who made art out of comics for widely differing reasons and effects. With comics so pervasive and vigourous through the early decades of this century, especially in America in newspapers and comic books, artists could not help being conscious of them.

Some introduced comics as an everyday mass-produced object, as in the earliest example in the exhibition, *Lucky Strike* (1924), where Stuart Davies includes a Tad Dorgan sports cartoon in his man-made 'still life'. Printed characters and strips were physically pasted down in Eduardo Paolozzi's collages and Rauschenberg's combine-paintings, as emblems of American consumerism and urban life. Jasper Johns stuck down a Sunday instalment of *Alley Oop* and painted over it until it became a blurred motif. Fifties Beat artist Jess was one of the first to cut up and re-assemble whole episodes of comics. He took Chester Gould's stark no-nonsense morality play *Dick Tracy* and scrambled it into Theatre of the Absurd, with the anagram title *Tricky Cad*. Few artists, however, approached their own sequential stories, but Picasso's political etching *The Dream and Lie of Franco* (1937) has affinities with comic strip narrative, as well as traditional woodcut illustration.

Lichtenstein's insights into comics and his consistent use of them mark him out from his predecessors. He had begun by drawing famous figures like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny to amuse his young children. But by 1962 his focus shifted to the weightier love and death themes in romance and war comics. These highly charged melodramatic genres had become formulas illustrated with impersonal standardised styles. The mass-production of comic books necessitated streamlined artwork and cheap printing. Hard black outlines were filled in with the few colours available from black, blue, red and yellow, either as a solid or in dot screens. Lichtenstein saw how these high impact clichés and technical limitations could be used in paintings in part to upset art lovers' pre-occupations with seriousness, abstraction and medium purity.

'It was hard to get a painting that was despicable enough so that nobody would hang it. Everybody was hanging everything. It was almost acceptable to hang a dripping paint rag, everybody was accustomed to this. The one thing everybody hated was commercial art: apparently they didn't hate that enough either.' [1]



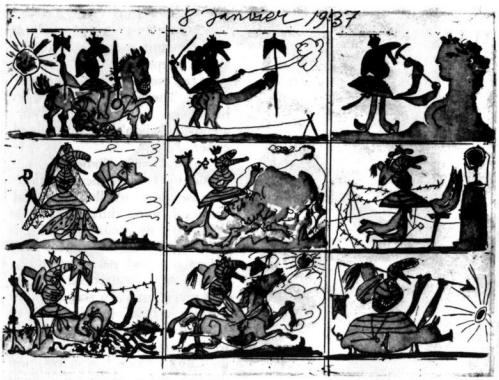
ROY LICHTENSTEIN
IMAGE DUPLICATOR
1963

From a science-fiction comic of the time, probably drawn by Jack Kirby, the mainstay of Marvel Comics.

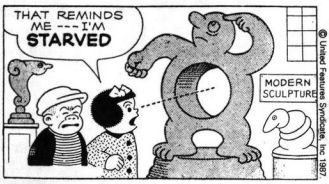
In the early Sixties though, comics still shocked the respectable, because they recalled the anti-comics hysteria during the Cold War years. By accusing comics of seducing innocent readers into deliquency and deviation, moral guardians like Dr. Frederic Wertham had made comics a scapegoat for the public's fear of its dark side. In 1954 horror and crime comics were neutered out of existence by the Comics Code Authority. From the war and romance comics that survived, Lichtenstein magnified their male militaristic aggression and female longing for romance and painted them as icons and observations of American society.

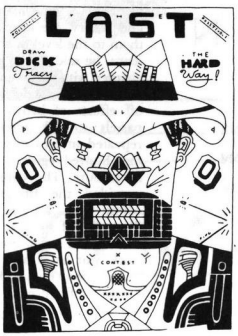
During this same period but quite independently, Andy Warhol was making his own provocative gesture to the art world in his earliest canvases, hand-painted versions of familiar comic characters like Popeye, Superman, Dick Tracy and Nancy. He too was elevating them to the level of contemporary icons; he said, '...the paintings are charged with their very presence.'[2] He soon switched from the one-off effects of brush strokes and pastels to silk screen editions, repeated images distinguished by their blurred registration and choice of colours. The comic paintings provided the bridge from his commercial art as a fashion illustrator of shoes to his fine art. Comics did not dominate his later work, but he acknowledged their importance: 'Hergé [the creator of Tintin] influenced my work as much as Disney. Hergé...had great political and satirical dimensions.'[3] He returned to them in 1981 in his series on Great American Myths where Mickey Mouse and Superman rub shoulders with Dracula and Uncle Sam and in *The New Spirit* (1985) using Donald Duck. Unlike Lichtenstein or Warhol, other Pop Art associates concentrated on one specific character; Claes Oldenburg adopted Mickey Mouse, Öyvind Fahlström examined Krazy Kat, John Wesley used Dagwood Bumstead from *Blondie*.

Whatever objections the art world or comic professionals had raised to Pop Art, they were overshadowed by the enormous public interest it aroused. In 1966 the Tate's purchase of Lichtenstein's *WHAAAM!* was a major news story. His heightening of comics' sound effects influenced titles of British weeklies like *WHAM!, SMASH!* and *POW!* and the camp fight scenes in the *Batman* TV series. From September to December 1965 Marvel christened their comic books 'Pop Art Productions'. The



ABOVE: *IN THE DREAM AND LIE OF FRANCO I*, 1937, PICASSO LAMBASTS THE SPANISH DICTATOR BY TURNING HIM INTO A POMPOUS DESTRUCTIVE MONSTER.



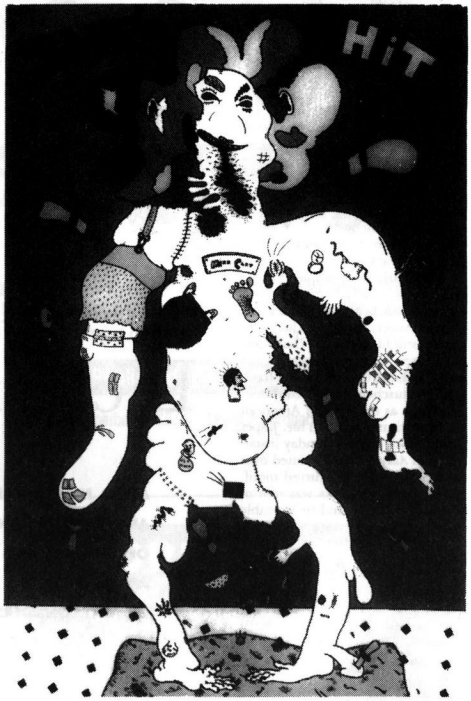


ABOVE: ERNIE BUSHMILLER'S PLUCKY TYKE NANCY

LEFT: *DICK TRACY* CREATED IN 1931 BY CHESTER GOULD IS CUSTOMISED BY KARL WIRSUM, 1978



LEFT: ANDY WARHOL PAINTS POPEYE, 1961-62, THE SPINACH-POWERED SAILOR CREATED BY ELZIE SEGAR IN 1929. BELOW: *SHE'S HIT*, 1967, BY JIM NUTT, A MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO ARTGANG THE HAIRY WHO.



enthusiastic embrace of Pop is clear from this effusive *SMASH!* editorial:

'... all of a sudden (after years of incredible neglect by some eggheads who should have known better) comics are the 'IN' thing!! You can see what we mean all around you! The design of up-to-the-minute posters and advertisements, the editorial pages of the big, glossy magazines...all are "switched on" to comic-style art and illustration, to the comic-style use of 'speech balloons' to put across the message!

'And that's not all! Serious pop-art painters find their inspiration from such sources as the 'good ol' Power Pack'! The Tate Gallery (and you can't get much more high-brow than that) recently purchased a high-priced painting by American artist Lichenstein (sic) called 'WHAAM'...which is based on a section of an adventure comic strip!

'That's the way it is today! Everyone's getting the message! Comics are FUN! Comics are STYLISH! Comics are TREND! We could have told them a long time ago, right? But isn't it nice?... knowing that WE'VE been on the swinging wavelength all along!' [4]

But away from the increasingly acceptable face of New York Pop Art and its West Coast contemporaries, broad-shouldered Chicago gave birth to a new, more dangerous species of comic-inspired art. Chicago Imagism was launched in 1966 by the six-artist group, the Hairy Who, whose key members were Jim Nutt and Karl Wirsum. Their attitude to classic comics broke with Pop Art's sensibility. The Hairy Who produced their own colour comic books of variations on their full-size paintings, which doubled as exhibition catalogues, and displayed cases of popular comics and toys alongside their work. 'While the Imagists undoubtedly intended an ironic statement about high art by their reliance on low sources, they unlike the Pop artists, intended no irony toward the sources themselves. The Imagists genuinely admired the directness and readability of 30s and 40s vintage commercial and popular art and incorporated this stylization into their work.' [5]

They rejected Pop's formal deconstructions and European art's refinement in favour of aggressive energy and black humour. For men to wear long hair at that time was a sign of defiance and strength and hair's significance carried over into the group's name and the hairy legs, armpits, stubble, shaving cuts in their paintings. Jim Nutt's *She's Hit* (1967) shows a brightly coloured body shuddering with bodily functions, eating, sweating, excreting, bleeding, all worlds away from the clean, idealised Americans of the romance comics Lichtenstein quoted. Karl Wirsum exploded the bold shapes of Nancy and Dick Tracy faces into symmetrical circuit boards or designs for Japanese toy robots.

From 1966 to 1969 the Hairy Who harnessed the raw honest vitality of comics and injected it with fresh ideas from ethnic, naïve and Outsider art. This may explain why their work is some of the only art inspired by comics that has had any direct relation to developments in later comics. Their taboo-breaking and counter-cultural stand coincided with the emerging underground comics of the late Sixties. Their unbridled imagination and integration of primitive art sources is reflected in the startling psychodramas of Rory Hayes and in the comics by emerging Seventies artoonists Gary Panter, Mark Beyer, Lynda Barry, Savage Pencil and others. They also provide a connection with young French painters like Robert Combas and Herve di Rosa.

Most of the Seventies and Eighties breeds of comic-inspired artists from America and Europe, on the other hand, have gone back

RIGHT: MUTATED MICKEY MICE BY KEITH HARING, *UNTITLED*, 1985.









ABOVE LEFT: STEVE GIANAKOS, *LULU AND JESUS*, 1981, FROM *LITTLE LULU* BY 'MARGE' (MARJORIE BUELL) AND JOHN STANLEY, AND *DAG'N'DOLF*, 1981, FROM DAGWOOD BUMSTEAD, *BLONDIE'S* HUSBAND BY CHIC YOUNG.

LEFT: KENNY SCHARF'S *FELIX ON A PEDESTAL*, 1982, REVIVES THE ANIMATED CARTOONS *FELIX THE CAT* BY PAT SULLIVAN AND *THE FLINTSTONES* and *JETSONS* BY BILL HANNA AND JOE BARBERA.



ABOVE: FROM *FELIX THE CAT* CARTOON STRIP BY OTTO MESMER, 1934.

to quoting the same timeless early all-American characters used by previous generations—Superman, Mickey Mouse, Nancy, Felix—adding occasionally more modern icons from their Sixties childhoods, such as *Spider-Man* and *The Fantastic Four* from Marvel comics and *The Flintstones, The Jetsons* and *The Pink Panther* from Saturday morning cartoon shows.

A more recent absorption has been graffiti and subway art. Basquiat, Rammellzee and Haring came out of this and their urgent large scale 'anti-art' was rapidly dissipated from spontaneous bravado on public property to tamed canvases in galleries. Haring's procedure is just the opposite to Lichtenstein's pre-determined paintings; 'I try to work in a completely automatic way. The ideas are in my head but I never have anything very planned out.' [6] Perhaps this explains why Haring's exuberant decorative work can appear thin on thought. Behind Kenny Scharf's schockadelic paintings, however, lie both his nostalgia for the naïve innocence and optimism of his youth—the space age dream of George, Elroy and Astro from *The Jetsons*—and his real fears for the nuclear future. Ronnie Cutrone, a 'Factory' worker with Warhol, sends his cartoon favourites like Woody Woodpecker into disturbing moral battlegrounds as an archangel or Christ figure.

As striking as many of these current iconoclastic works undoubtedly are, one wonders where their ongoing quotation of comics is leading. How can they recapture the sheer provocation of proto-Pop Art? The cultural status quo in the Sixties agreed on a sophisticated reading of Pop's revelations, with the minimum examination of the comics themselves. In this way, Michael Wood could write in his review in *New Society* of Lichtenstein, 'And the show at the Tate, whatever else it may be, is for us, who rarely read comics, what the comic books are for the people who read them'. [7]

Most of the comics-inspired art that has followed inevitably echoes Pop Art's respectable precedent; this avoids the need for any re-appraisal of comics. Adam Gopnik observed this in *The New York Review of Books* in a review of a recent collection of George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* strips:

'Even among those who accept the importance of popular imagery in the making of modern art, there's still a tendency to see the popular tradition as a kind of folk tradition, fixed and unchanging: Lichtenstein responds to "comic books" rather than to Jack Kirby or Stan Lee;...At worst, popular imagery, and cartoon and comic strip in particular, are treated as though they were somehow natural rather than cultural forms, polished pebbles rather than finished artifacts. But "cartoon" doesn't make comic strips; cartoonists do.'

As the frontiers between 'high' and 'low' culture continue to blur and these new painters persist in quoting from comics, these phenomena demand a re-evaluation of the remarkable cartoonists who have shaped the comic strip medium, from its famous classics to its latest dynamics.

NOTES

1. Interview with John Coplans, Roy Lichtenstein Exhibition Tate Catalogue, 1968.
2. Warhol quoted in *A Concise History of Modern Painting* by Herbert Read, Thames & Hudson, 1974
3. Warhol quoted in *Herge & Tintin Reporters* by Philippe Goddin, Editions du Lombard, 1986
4. *Smash!* No. 79, Odhams, August 1967
5. Russell Bowman, 'Chicago Imagism: the movement and the style' in catalogue to the *Who Chicago?* exhibition at the Sunderland Arts Centre, Ceolfrith Press, 1980
6. Haring quoted in 'B.D. et Figuration Libre' by Pierre Sterckx, *Cahiers de la Bande Dessinee* No. 72, Editions Glenat, November 1986
7. Michael Wood, 'Painting as language' in *New Society* (1968), reprinted in *Arts in Society*, Fontana, 1977
8. Adam Gopnik, 'The Genius of George Herriman' in *The New York Review of Books*, December 18th, 1986

HIGH BROW

FROM THEIR BEGINNINGS, comics have had an image problem. The first American comic strip character, The Yellow Kid in *Hogan's Alley* by Richard Outcault, started in 1896 in the new Sunday editions of newspapers and was associated with the public outrage they stirred up at their 'breaking of the Sabbath'. When a rival paper lured Outcault away, the circulation tussle for his popular Yellow Kid gave sensationalist 'yellow' journalism its name. As early as 1905, the press was denouncing the violence in comics, even though cartoonists went no further than slapstick at the time. To counter these complaints, the *Chicago Tribune* commissioned prestige strips from European illustrators, among them Lyonel Feininger, whose newspaper cartooning foreshadowed his celebrated career as a painter and Bauhaus teacher.

As for the comic book, it got an early boost in 1942, when the American Institute of Graphic Arts mounted a history of 'narrative illustration'. This exhibition came up with an extended family tree for the humble comic book, traced back through illustrious ancestors like early wood block prints and illuminated manuscripts to ancient hieroglyphics and cave paintings. A prime mover behind this was M.C. Gaines, the salesman who had invented the standard format of American colour comic books in 1933, originally for free advertising premiums. By 1942 the American public were hooked on 10 cent comics, consuming 15 million copies a month.

Sales figures broke new records during the Second World War thanks to Nazi-bashing superheroes. But by the early Fifties, psychiatrists were alerting parents to comics' corrupting hold over their children. Amid comic burnings and Senate enquiries, publishers had to improve public relations, and so they cleaned up their act by setting up severe regulation through the Comic Code Authority from 1954.

But comics' tarnished reputation persisted, inspiring Pop artists to quote them in the early Sixties and vindicate them, at least as powerful iconic sources for paintings. Since then, the 'museumification' of comics has not stopped. In 1967, thanks to some dedicated French intellectuals, the American comic strip and its European progeny made it to the Louvre in Paris. In London in 1971 the ICA showed a wide-ranging survey of British, American and European work in *AAARGH! A Celebration of Comics*. In Britain alone, the Eighties have seen the *Graphic Rap* show at the ICA, *Strip Language* at London's Gimpel Fils Gallery, the Cambridge Animation Festival's *Film & Strip*, and *Punch Lines* last summer at the Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool.



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CHESTER GOULD'S DICK TRACY BURSTS OUT LAUGHING AT THE IDEA OF COMICS BEING ART, AFTER AN ARTICLE BY RAYMOND DURGNAT DESCRIBED GOULD AS AN ARTIST.

In Comic Iconoclasm, its organiser Sheena Wagstaff has chosen not to present the comic-inspired fine art alongside any original pages from the comics themselves, preferring instead their printed form as comics and books in the reading satellites and bookshop. 'I'd like this show to be seen as an arrow. What I'm trying to emphasise is the absence in the show, which will be filled by people's curiosity outside the exhibition.' The show sets up a persuasive contrast between the public, shared viewing of paintings on the gallery wall and the private, intimate reading of comics on the printed page. If you thought the painting was good, wait till you read the comic!

People do need reminding that before Mickey Mouse, Superman, Dick Tracy or Krazy Kat were given gallery credibility as icons, they were unique creations of gifted individuals and they are most alive in their fully realised narrative worlds. Their art status has disturbing implications; what has it done for comics? It gives the highbrow art aesthetes a respectable way to enjoy comics and yet remain aloof from the 'masses' who read them. It reinforces the misconception that the comic medium offers nothing more than one-dimensional nostalgic clichés, to be given subtlety and sophistication only in their Fine Art context. This blinkered view was discussed by Adam Gopnik in relation to the pivotal role of George Herriman, creator of *Krazy Kat*.

'The conventional account of popular art and modern art allows essentially two kinds of traffic. Popular culture can send up a naïve form that the modernist then makes self-conscious and ironic; or the modernist can send down a self-conscious and ironic form that the popular culture then uses to sell something.

'But this is art history as written by the 'Dingbats'; popular imagery and its heroes are the unseen *Family Upstairs*, inviting paranoid and comic fantasies precisely because we refuse to find out very much about them. In the absence of any serious study of crucial "intermediate" figures, missing links like George Herriman, art history has been condemned to repeat certain clichés about popular culture and modern art without much variation or new evidence.... And when we look at what George Herriman actually did, we see that the conventional strait-jacketed

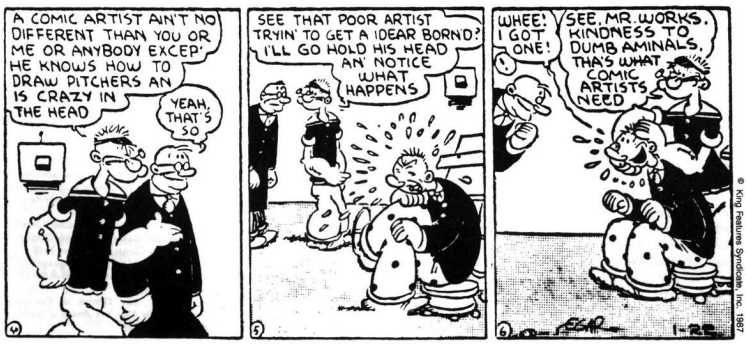

© Hergé 1987

TINTIN PAINTS A PORTRAIT OF HIS CREATOR, HERGÉ.

picture of high and low in modern art is just false.'[1]

The distinction between 'high' and 'low' art can be used as a pricing guide or as an indicator of an artist's intentions. But such a hierarchy between the arts is maintained only by the refusal of the cultural establishment to acknowledge comics as a valid autonomous art. Thierry Groensteen, editor of the European magazine of comics criticism *Les Cahiers de la Bande Dessinee*, has written, '...all hierarchy between the arts is a priori absurd. The dividing line between the major and the minor crosses through each of the arts, but does not separate them into two camps. In all arts the mediocre is side-by-side with the excellent. Why then do fine and cultivated people...condemn an art without having explored it at all?'[2] Unlike the fields of modern art or literature, comics have always

POPEYE AS A NEWSPAPER EDITOR KNOWS HOW TO TREAT HIS COMIC ARTISTS IN THIS 1934 SEQUENCE BY ELZIE SEGAR.



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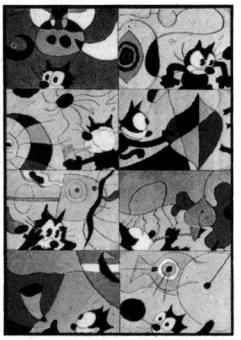
been judged only on their basic mass-appeal production, never from a knowledge of the medium's true masterpieces. Modern artists cite mainly the most popular figures but as great as they are, they are only part of the rich diversity of comics, past and present, not just from America but from all over the world.

Many fine artists genuinely admire comics; Lichtenstein holds the comics in high regard, as 'an art form, after a fashion. I believe, however, that the people who work on it [comics] do not consider it such.'[3] Indeed they do not and many comics artists have a healthy distrust of attempts to legitimise or intellectualise what they are doing. In choosing to create comics, some feel they are escaping the academia of the art world. Until recently, comics have not been the subject of criticism or indepth analysis, and so offer a free form for expression, a playground where nobody is watching. Some comic



ART SPIEGELMAN'S MOVING HOLOCAUST HISTORY, *MAUS*.

artists and fans are wary of any attempts at more mature approaches, because comics are part of their childhood culture, often the first art and stories they bought for themselves. They want comics to stay that way, to give them that same thrill, chuckle, sense of wonder or rebellion—as Art



FELIX THE CAT MEETS JOAN MIRÓ IN A POSTER BY PABLO ECHAURREN AVAILABLE FROM ARTBEAT (01-736 0337)

Spiegelman calls it, 'comics-as-kid-culture'.

But the aggressive iconoclasts in fine art are not alone in seeing the ironic and satiric properties of classic comics; cartoonists themselves have done their own share of irreparable irreverence. Harvey Kurtzman started it all in 1952 with his razor-sharp spoofs in *Mad*. As the cover line went, this really was 'Humor in a Jugular Vein', as *Mickey Rodent* gets his revenge on Darnold Duck for hustling him out of the limelight and *Superduperman* turns out to be as much of a creep as his secret identity, Clark Bent. In their own comics by the Fifties the superhero had lost his propagandist role from the War years and instead played the part of comedy straight man in *Superman* comics or the tragic hero with problems in Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's Marvel line. Underground comix picked up on *Mad*'s devastating effect with *Wonder Warthog*. 'The Hog of Steel', by Gilbert Shelton and funny animal exposés like Robert Armstrong's *Mickey Rat* and R. Crumb's *Fritz the Cat*. Marvel responded with Steve Gerber's *Howard the Duck*, who even ran for President. The last year has seen the most startling revisions of superheroics and animorphics yet, the former in Frank Miller's brutal Batman rebirth *Dark Knight* and the complex parallel world of *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, the latter in *Maus*, the story of a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, by his son Art Spiegelman. There will always be comics for kids—there must be—but after these breakthroughs, there's no going back.

What's more, whole territories of comics operate beyond this destruction or reinterpretation of the medium's own historical icons. Lichtenstein said 'Cartooning itself sometimes resembles other periods of art perhaps unknowingly'[4]. Actually many cartoonists consciously incorporate sources from fine art into their strips. In *Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD* in the late Sixties, Steranko made references to Salvador Dali in a drug-induced dream sequence, and used collage and Op Art effects. Barry Smith introduced into his *Conan the Barbarian* first the poster art of Mucha and Art Nouveau, later turning to the Pre-Raphaelites, in particular William Holman Hunt. The work of Euro-comic *auteurs* like José Muñoz, Jacques Tardi, Lorenzo Mattotti, Jacques Loustal, is built on complex sources, many from the world of art as well as film, literature, music. The cross-currents have become increasingly rich, for example, where Pablo Echaurren, the son of the fine artist Matta, is a leading cartoonist of Italian avant garde *fumetti*.

America's one-way export of comics dominated the world for decades, but recently the tide has turned. America is finally allowing an influx of the dynamic nationalistic variations that have grown out of and-or away from its original forms. Alan Moore from Britain, Moebius from France, Hugo Pratt from Italy, Muñoz and Sampayo from Argentina, Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima from Japan, are just some of the pioneering picture-story-tellers expanding the medium to more subtle themes, human and political.

Pundits no longer simply tell people about the potential of

LOW BROW



comics in some far-off future. People can see the potential realised today for themselves, more and more of it, as all the classics come back into print and new graphic novels become best-sellers. And what's alarming the 'defenders' of culture is that the whole question over whether they are highbrow or lowbrow may not even matter.

NOTES

1. Adam Gopnik, 'The Genius of George Herriman' in *The New York Review of Books*, December 18th, 1986.
2. Thierry Groensteen, 'Le Retour du Baton' in *Les Cahiers de la Bande Dessinee* No. 75, May-June, 1987.
3. Interview with John Coplans, Roy Lichtenstein Exhibition, Tate Catalogue, 1968.
4. ibid.

CLASSIC COMICS

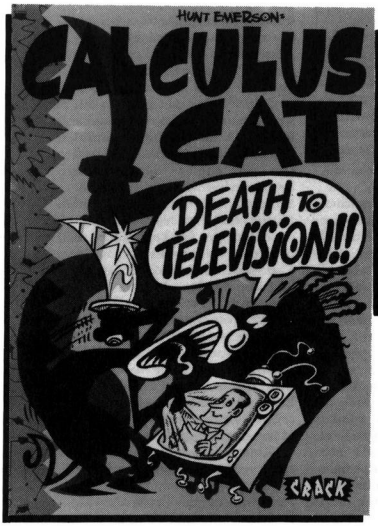
SUPERMAN, monthly colour comics and reprint anthologies, DC Comics.
MICKEY MOUSE and DONALD DUCK, monthly colour comics, Gladstone.
POPEYE, the complete Segar years in eight volumes, Fantagraphics.
KRAZY KAT, The Comic Art of George Herriman, Abrams.
FELIX THE CAT, The Comic Adventures, Determined Productions.
DICK TRACY, a series of books and a monthly magazine, Blackthorne.
TINTIN, twenty-one colour albums hardback and paperback, Methuen.
MAD, paperbacks, Ballantine and large colour hardbacks, Russ Cochran.
You can buy these and a great deal more from specialist comic shops and some bookshops and newsagents. For more information, see ESCAPE for a Modern Guide to Comics.

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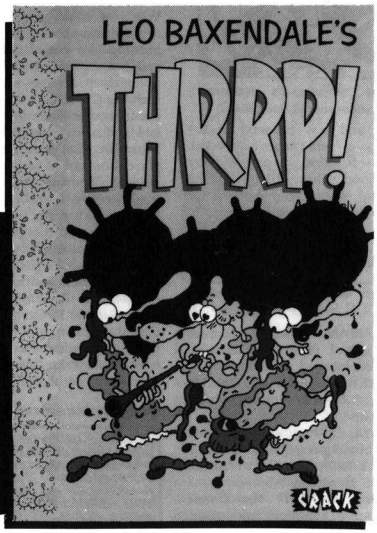


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LIVES OF THE SUPERHEROES

CHURCH AND COMICS QUICKLY UNDERSTOOD THAT 'EVERY ICON TELLS A STORY'. WHY THEN, ASKS ED PINSENT, DOES MUCH MODERN ART DENY THIS NARRATIVE POTENTIAL?

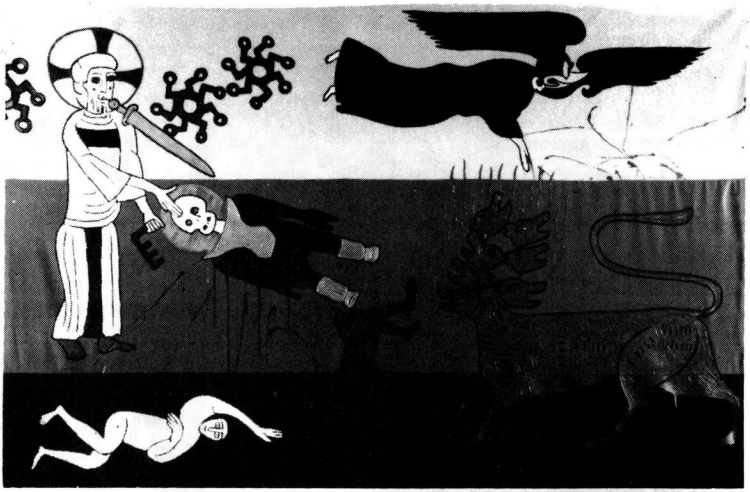
IN THIS SHOW we have a painting called *The Dead Christ In Space*. I find this distasteful—an annoying juxtaposition deployed for shock value—partly because it pokes fun at Christian icons, also because it isolates a cartoon image and leaves it stranded in an inappropriate joyless context.

Both comics and icons are highly specific forms of applied art. To view them in a better light, it helps to understand the means of production by which they come about. If we do this, I think we can discover a few relations that associate them in a way that this exhibition does not cover.

There is extreme stylisation in the painting of religious icons—human figures, faces, natural environment—are all rendered in a precise, semi-decorative manner that is not drawn directly from nature. Likewise much syndicated comic art relies on similar stylisation. Icon painters were instructed how to work in their particular style; they were issued manuals that specified the correct methods of production, imagery, composition, etc. Any animator who works for Disney studios is given worksheets so he can draw Donald Duck correctly. The same goes for many superhero artists, for example *Superman* artist Curt Swan produced several model sheets for his fellow artists. To train aspiring amateurs Marvel have issued a manual, *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*. In twentieth century Western art, the notion of the artist as individual creator is central; in both Christian icons and mass-marketed comic characters, an artist's individual style is secondary to producing images the 'right' way. Religious icons were intended for a broad audience, who needed clear identifiable images of Christ, the Saints and the Madonna; the artist existed as a community figure, confirming shared perceptions and not providing an individual personal interpretation. The comic book audience is just as broad. No one would read *Popeye* if the succeeding artists who worked on the strip had done anything to alter significantly the look of Segar's creations. Think of the hundreds of artists who have drawn *Superman*, *Batman* and the rest; it would be absurd if they tried radical variations of details of mythology, costume, physical appearance, etc.

Both icon painters and comic artists are working in a long tradition with certain limitations and strict guidelines. The former were controlled by the authority of the Church who insisted on uniformity of message, the latter are controlled by huge publishing syndicates concerned with mass-production and merchandising.

In depicting lives of the Saints, icon painters had to select certain scenes and create a tableau that displayed them clearly and correctly. Important events such as the Crucifixion or the death of the Madonna were all portrayed in a certain manner. They evolved into the 'official' version, almost how the actual event took place, and to vary it in any way would be sacriligious. A parallel may be drawn with comic artists who perpetuate the classic characters of comics. In recounting lives of the Superheroes, certain events always have to happen and they must always be portrayed in the same way. There are countless drawings of the planet Krypton exploding,

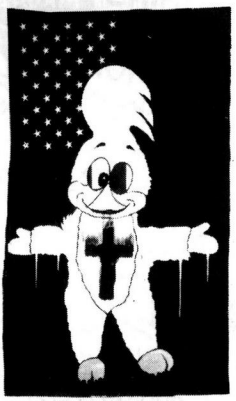


RONNIE CUTRONE
THE DEAD CHRIST IN SPACE
1983



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CURT SWAN'S MODEL SHEET FOR *SUPERMAN*, 'SHOWN FROM EVERY ANGLE, AND UNDERGOING EVERY EMOTION'.



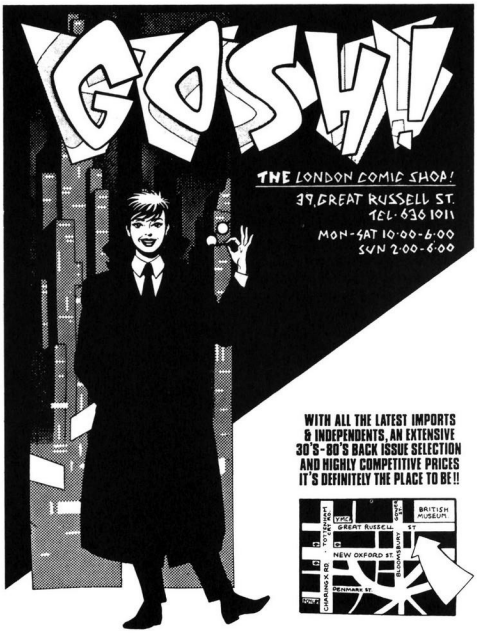
RONNIE CUTRONE NAILS WALTER LANTZ'S WOODY WOODPECKER IN *WHITE WOODY*, 1982.

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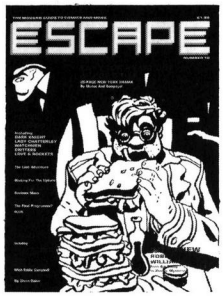
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'Appropriation: The making of a thing private property, esp. one's own; taking to one's own use;...'
Oxford English Dictionary

THE ART OF APPROPRIATION

ARE COMICS COMMON PROPERTY? AS FINE ARTISTS REACH FOR THE IMAGE DUPLICATOR, TREVS PHOENIX APPRAISES THEIR STATE AND STATUS.

Your mother has another word for it.

1. Comics are all about rhythm and context: the relation of one panel to the next; one pose to another; how one cover, one sequence echoes or overlaps another. When removed from their sequence, strip images are contextless and require 'critical mediation' for their content to be revealed. Sound familiar?

As painting becomes more conceptual, so the role of the critic as interpreter becomes more important and the critics and painters create meaning together. The high cost of participating in the status circus maintains its exclusivity and densely polysyllabled obfuscating critical theory gives the air to the public, who lack the vocabulary or perhaps the patience to question it.

2. Comics are low status; anybody can pick them up, their content needs no explanation or mediation, they are printed on cheap paper which quickly degrades and if they don't satisfy their audience, they vanish. Conversely, painting is all about coded exclusivity, which maintains its value. The more prices rise, the tighter the system becomes, on the look-out for 'stars' with the right conceptual framework.

3. Because comic artists have the lowest status of all artists, their role as creators can be ignored and painters can take their images without consent or even question of permission or payment arising.

4. The use of established characters in a way which makes no original statements reinforces the same trivialisation of images that painters purport to reject. If they have no point of view, what are they trying to say?

5. It is true that comic characters are often bigger than the people who create them. Very well, but whose interests does it serve for this to be so? It isn't inevitable—after all, Walt Disney's name is as famous as Mickey Mouse. But far fewer people know who Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel are, because a corporation owns their character and wants as many people to work on Superman comics as possible.

6. If the entire act of creating a painting consists of reproducing another man's drawing, adding perhaps colour or intriguing title and an inflated size, what can the 'appropriator' claim to have done?

Is irony a legitimate creative tool like gouache?



JERRY KEARNS
TWIST AND SHOUT
1985

From Brian Bolland's Judge Death in 2000AD and a Bernì Wrightson horror comic.

LIVES OF THE SUPERHEROES Cont'd.

Superman's rocket flying away, its arrival on Earth and his discovery by the Kent family. These are the scenes of his origin; they are sacrosanct. When Frank Miller re-defined Batman in *Dark Knight*, even he adhered faithfully to the origin scenes in Bruce Wayne's early life as defined by Bill Finger and Bob Kane. He may have added details, but he still respected the crucial turning points in the story: the murder of his parents, his determination for revenge, and the bat flying in through the window.

Such pictures are the true icons of the comic strip. The major characters, from *Krazy Kat* to *Dick Tracy*, have their own mythology from which a species of iconography has developed. The comic artists revere this mythology, in the same way that painters of Christian icons venerated sacred texts. The fine artists in this show exploit comic characters by reducing them from fully realised entities in their own right to emblems void of their original narrative, cast adrift into alienating nihilistic territory.

In the catalogue to the Francis Bacon show at the Tate (Summer 1985), I first came across the notion of 'the narrative potential of image' as the essayist described it. Bacon was apparently concerned with the fact that whenever figurative imagery of any sort was used in a painting, the viewer would naturally start to form a story around what he was seeing. Bacon tried his best to deny such narrative potential, by using distancing techniques—grotesque distortion of his figures, reduction of his backgrounds to minimal outlines, even slapping huge abstract brushstrokes onto the canvas that seem to tear into his subjects faces and bodies. But I feel it all fails; at best he only disrupts normal viewing pleasure, drawing the viewer inside a fiction up to a certain point, then throwing him back onto the 'reality' of painted canvas with a violent start.

This made me think further about narrative in pictures. Abstract art might be seen as another step towards dispensing with story-telling in pictures and pursuing the notion of a pure untainted art. But in a sense this fails too; surely there must be narrative potential in all images? Perhaps it is a factor of the human mind that we can't help trying to discern stories in all pictures. Certainly the need to hear stories unfolding is a universal one, inborn in all of us.

To take another tangent, I was reminded of the developments in late Seventies UK avant garde cinema—films of Gidal, Le Grice, Leggett. Each film-maker stridently denied any inkling of narrative in their work, chiefly through their markedly materialist use of celluloid, film-as-film. They had consciously decided that stories were corrupt and manipulative and did not offer enough scope for experimentation and interpretation by the audience. Yet when I view such films, I see stories in them of a sort, stripped down, disjunctive and strangely ordered but stories nonetheless. I eventually saw how unattainable is their goal of non-narrative images and how impossible it is to achieve a form of art devoid of this most central function.

This to me reinforces the value of any art which proceeds with narrative pictures. The religious icons developed from the belief in the sacred texts, and the necessity of having visual images to interpret their key aspects and present them to a greater audience. Similarly comics grew from the public's need for immediately accessible stories. Rather than deny the narrative potential of images as much of twentieth century art has done, comics have from the very beginning embraced it for all its worth. Much of the work in this exhibition that quotes specific 'icons' of comics, is relying heavily on the viewer's recognition of particular characters and with them their narrative worlds. Artists who adopt ready-made characters save themselves the trouble of having to invent original narratives and at the same time derive many of the benefits of such familiarity. Other artists like Jess Collins with *Tricky Cad* or Fahlström with *Performing K.K. III* distort and fragment existing comic strips to disrupt their narrative structure or lay bare their story-telling mechanics. The few artists who do attempt their own narratives rarely achieve more than a faint echo of the comic strip's power. In short, these borrowings give a spurious meaning to work which would otherwise be pretty much devoid of content.

The fact that Fine Artists borrow from comics at all, using them in an exploitative fashion, is not in itself objectionable. But what I personally find distasteful is the patronising and insolent manner in which it is done. Comics are now, and have always been, a vital, exciting and dynamic art form. It might be that fine artists are possibly attracted to the energy of the comics medium and not unreasonably want to harness some of that energy to inject into their own moribund work. But to acknowledge that comics are, in many ways, a superior medium—no one has the courage to admit to that.

Modern Ott's Krucifixion of Krazy Kat

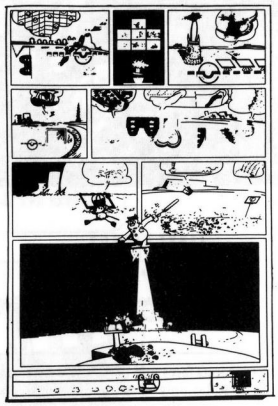
SAVAGE PENCIL RETURNS TO COCONINO COUNTY AND FINDS A LOT MORE THERE THAN JUST A KAT AND A MOUSE.

To the untrained eyeball of the innocent, modern art's interpretation of the ever changing world about him appears as an ugly, self indulgent mess. The cryptic message squatting behind the mass of squiggles and squirted paint remains unreadable. The only thing the poor sucker can decipher, between the throbbing lines of colour, is the price tag. A long row of noughts which causes even more animosity to flare between the two. The last straw has been broken and modern art has lost another potential sympathiser. Communication has irretrievably broken down.

Now, let's transfer modern art of another kind to the funny pages of his daily paper and watch what happens. Instead of making his head hurt, this modern art makes him laugh and feel good about himself. Something about *these* squiggles give him a kick of inner pleasure, a feeling that he is directly connected to the visions and ideas of the artist. Of course it isn't really modern art is it? It's only a comic strip...

The comic strip was *Krazy Kat*, creation of George Herriman who began his labour of love in 1910 as an addition to one of his existing strips, *The Family Upstairs*. By 1911, the adventures of Krazy Kat and company had blossomed into a daily strip which ran continuously up to the artist's death in 1944. During that time Herriman brought to the world another planet, in the shape of Coconino County, a surreal, forever shifting landscape populated entirely by the scratchy primitive shapes of various talking animals. Three of these were integral to the central plot. Krazy is a kat who has fallen head over heels in love with an anarchic mouse called Ignatz. The mouse resents such feelings and tries to ward off Krazy be beaning the kat with brix, courtesy of Kolin Kelly Brick Dealer. Instead of being discouraged that such violence might be a negative response from Ignatz, Krazy takes such behaviour as a sign of returned affection. In the middle of all this action stands Offisa Pup, symbol of law and order and jailer of the brick throwing Ignatz Mouse. Within this eternal triangle Herriman breathed some kind of magic which made it all come to life. He gave his creations a quirky humanity and a language of their own, one which only helped to heighten the charm of his imaginary Coconino County.

Krazy Kat was also his canvas for experimentation, an opportunity for Herriman to explore the full potential of his imagination. Anything could happen within that daily page of newsprint and yet, for all its apparent looseness, the strip was a tightly constructed series of elegantly executed and original ideas. The life force that pulsed through *Krazy Kat* was both special and influential to many. Some would stand back and admire its power from a distance while others had ideas of slipping momentarily into Herriman's shoes and go walking off into the landscape of Coconino County.



ÖYVIND FAHLSTRÖM
PERFORMING KK III
1965

One such dreamer was Swedish born fine artist Öyvind Fahlström whose obsession with Herriman's world resulted in a series of *Krazy Kat* influenced works. The most famous of these is *Performing K.K. III* which was completed in 1965, a composition made up of oil, collage, canvas and four movable parts. Unfortunately this tribute is responsible for confusing the original simplicity of style which makes *Krazy Kat* work. In Fahlström's Coconino County all dialogue has been silenced in preference for symbolic heiroglyphics, the joy and humour has thus been dispensed with, as though Herriman's text for the strip is a secondary feature to the drawing instead of being an integral part. The landscape has also been cut to pieces and slotted out of its original perspective, it too has been rendered meaningless. The movable pieces depicting Krazy Kat, Ignatz Mouse and Offisa Pup look out of place no matter where they are placed on Fahlström's panelled canvas. Also, trimming the idea of the strip down to its main three characters is another error. Herriman's Coconino County thrived with all manner of eccentric characters. Where are Joe Stork, Mrs Kwakk Wakk and the afore mentioned Kolin Kelly for example? Missing in action painting perhaps?

That Fahlström was deeply touched by what he saw in *Krazy Kat* is evident. He, like many others, saw something precious and wonderful there and wanted to tell the world about his discovery. Only in doing so he has accidentally torn the wings off the very butterfly he longed to pin down and eventually set free again with his interpretation. Modern art has failed to gently grasp hold of what is essentially perfect. To make it theirs it must be crushed, its shape twisted to fit into the void of an art gallery. For only there is it worth anything to the art world. *Krazy Kat*,. although krucified, refuses to lie down... it is more than *only* a comic strip.

'ART COMES TO COCONINO AND KRAZY KAT IS KONSUMED WITH A KOPIOUS KWANTITY OF KURIOSITY'. GEORGE HERRIMAN ELEVATES HIS FELLOW CARTOONISTS SUCH AS TAD DORGAN AND DAN SMITH TO 'OLD MASTERS'. THESE FOUR PANELS CLOSE HIS SUNDAY PAGE FOR MARCH 4TH, 1928.



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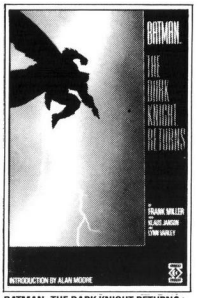
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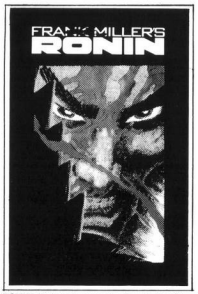
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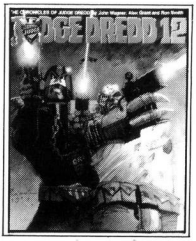
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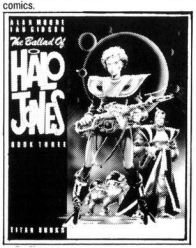
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IF YOU DON'T READ Time Out WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN LONDON?




DEEP IN THE JUNGLE, EVIL MEN TREMBLE, THE LION HALTS HIS MIGHTY ROAR, THE HYENA SULKS IN HIS LAIR, BUT THE ELEPHANT AND GAZELLE BOTH CALL HER FRIEND ...FOR SHE IS...
PANTHRA
THAT'S TED! I'D KNOW HIS LITTLE SQUEAKY VOICE ANYWHERE!
HELP! PANTHRA HELP!



LETTERING: TREVS PHOENIX.


STOP STRUGGLE! YOU KINGAR WOMAN- WE GO TO TREES!
AM I, YOU MONO-SYLLABIC MEATHEAD ?
YOU SCREAM- HA HA, NO ONE HELP YOU NOW!
AAAAAEEEEE
LISTEN BROTHERS! JUNGLE CRY OF PANTHRA!
SHE NEEDS US!
OOOOE EEE AAAA
STOP! YOU HURT EAR OF KINGAR! STOP OR KINGAR KILL!
GOOD! YOU STOP NOW! KINGAR NOT KILL YOU- HAVE BETTER IDEA!
STAY AWAY FROM ME, OR I'LL-
BOK!
HA HA- UGH!
MANY BIG THANKS TO YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE, FAITHFUL M'BONGO!
YES, PANTHRA! WE LOOK FOR BAD WHITE FELLA NOW!
A THOROUGH SEARCH YIELDS NO RESULTS
HE JUST DISAPPEARED PANTHRA!
HE CERTAINLY IS A MYSTERY..
I THINK I'LL ASK MY FATHER IF HE'S HEARD ANYTHING ON THE GRAPEVINE!
FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK, MY DEAR-


THERE WERE RUMOURS OF A 'PLANE CRASH IN THE JUNGLE AND OF A SINGLE SURVIVOR, A BOY, BEING RAISED BY A TROUPE OF LIONS!
A MOST REPREHENSIBLE ACT! IN MY DAY ORPHANS LIKE YOURSELF WERE INVARIABLY RAISED BY THE HIGHER SPECIES; APES LIKE MYSELF. NOW EVERY BLIGHTER'S AT IT!
NO WONDER THIS KINGAR SPEAKS SO UNUTTERABLY! I'VE HEARD THAT A BABY IS BEING RAISED BY A BUNCH OF BLOODY ANTS ACROSS THE RIVER - ONE FEARS FOR HIS MORALS!
BY THE WAY, THERES A NEW WHITE MAN SAFARI ABOUT, PANTHRA!
OK POP! WE'LL CHECK THEM OUT!
MISTER KRUGER! MUST OUR PROGRESS BE SO HEADLONG?
YA! MUST REACH ZER ANIMALS!
YOU KNOW KRUGER, I THINK THIS OBSESSION OF YOURS IS MOST UNHEALTHY! CAN'T YOU FORGIVE AND FORGET?
CHUK
ACH! HOW CAN I FORGIVE AND FORGET ZER VERDAMNT TIGER ZAT SCRATCHED AWAY HALF MY FACE?
GOOT! VEE HAF ARRIVED, BINGLE! EVERYZING HESS BEEN PREPARED- NOW I PROMISE SOME FINE SPORT, MEIN HERR!
ZER THRILL OF ZER HUNT!
KER-BLAM


LOOK AT ZAT! NOT ONE MISS!
ZER MARK OF A GREAT HUNTER, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE, BINGLE?
GUK!
BINGLE?
KRAG
SOME CRAZY WOMAN! I'LL.. AAGH!
YOU KILL MY FRIENDS, "GREAT HUNTER"!..
...NOW I KILL YOU!
GUK! GUK! GUK!
MEANWHILE...
THAT PANTHRA! SHE'S RUN OFF AHEAD AGAIN WITH M'BONGO!.. SIGHS I NEVER TIRE OF THE JUNGLE'S BEAUTY..
TAP TAP
THE ETERNAL TRANQUILITY, THE FRAGRANT ...HUH..?
GASP! GUK! GUK!
REMEMBER KINGAR- MAN-LIKE-WOMAN? YOU BAIT NOW! SO SCREAM!
AAAAAAAAAA
THAT'S TED! I MUST GO TO HIS AID! QUICK M'BONGO! TAKE THIS SCUM TO YOUR VILLAGE!
GUK! GUK!
O.K. PANTHRA!

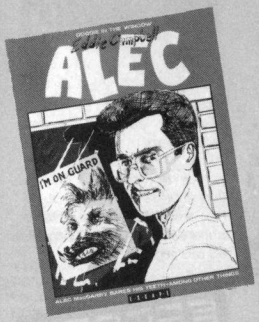

I HEAR HER COME QUICK!
BUT TAKE TIME TO FIND KINGAR - AND THEN KINGAR BE READY!
RELENTLESSLY, THE ENRAGED PANTHRA FOLLOWS THE TRAIL OF KINGAR AND TED, HEADING FOR THE FINAL CONFRONTATION!
MEANWHILE M'BONGO HAS SUFFERED A SUDDEN REVERSAL OF FORTUNES!
KEEP GOING, STUPID BLACK!
HA HA, IN HER HASTE YOUR DANGEROUS LADY FRIEND FORGOT TO RELIEVE ME OF MEIN PISTOLEN! HO!
WHAT HAPPEN NOW?
YOU'RE STILL GOING TO LEAD ME TO YOUR STINKING VILLAGE! ZIS WEAPON VILL PERSUADE YOUR PEOPLE TO HELP ME! NOW MAKE YOUR SELF USEFUL WITH THAT MACHETE!
WELL DONE, SMALL ONE! THANKS TO YOU I AM NEARER MY GOAL!
SUDDENLY...
YOU BLACK DEVIL! YOU TRY TO MURDER ME!
SWISH
NO, WHITE MAN, LOOK!
MEIN GOTT! A POISONOUS SNAKE ABOUT TO STRIKE! YOU HAF SAVED MEIN LIFE, BLACK MAN! BUT WHY DO YOU DO THIS FOR YOUR =GULP= ENEMY?
MEANWHILE...
THIS IS WHERE THE TRAIL ENDS, A DILAPIDATED TEMPLE DEEP IN THE JUNGLE!


INSIDE THE TEMPLE PANTHRA IS CONFRONTED BY A MOST BIZARRE SIGHT!
TED!
GUK GUK GUK
WOMAN! YOU HAVE FOUND KINGAR!!
YOU FOOL! LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO TED- SET HIM FREE NOW!
WHY WOMAN WANT HIM? HERE IS KINGAR! KINGAR WANT SOMETHING FROM WOMAN BEFORE FREE MAN!!
YOU'LL TASTE THE KISS OF MY LASH FIRST!
AH!
CRRACK!
YOU WITCH! KEEP BACK OR KINGAR CUT ROPE AND HE DIE!
O-O-O-KAY, YOU WIN
YOU PIG!
KINGAR ALWAYS WIN!
C'MERE PIG!
GUP!


GUK! GUK!
TASTE MY THICK WET TONGUE!
LET ME CLASP YOU TO MY..
..BOSOM!
GASP!
FATALLY PIERCED KINGAR DROPS TO THE FLOOR—
HE DIDN'T KNOW THE YEARS OF HARD JUNGLE LIVING HAVE MADE MY BREASTS AS HARD AS GRANITE AND AS SHARP AS HOWITZER SHELLS!
MEANWHILE...
MEIN GUK! I'M GOING TO FALL!
NO— WHITE MAN, HOLD ON TO ME!
I OWE YOU MEIN LIFE, MEIN FRIEND! I RENOUNCE MEIN BARBARISM! LET US GO DOWN AS BROTHERS!
BELOW LIES MY VILLAGE!
I SEE ZEM! YOUR HAPPY FRIENDLY PEOPLE COMING TO GREET US!
ZEY ARE SMILING! OH JOY!
SCHWEINHUNDT! I DON'T UNDERSTAND— WHY DID YOU SAVE MEIN LIFE ON ZE TRAIL?
I DIDN'T WANT TO CARRY YOU! NOW WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU!
YOU'RE DINNER BABY!
AND FINALLY, AT THE TRADITIONAL END-OF-STORY FEAST...
SAY PANTHRA, THIS IS DELICIOUS! ANYONE WE KNOW?
HA HA HA!
HA HA HA!
THE End!

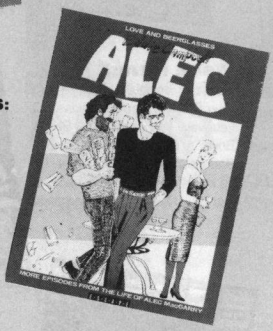
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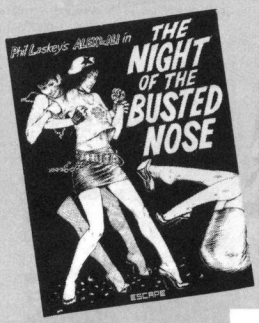
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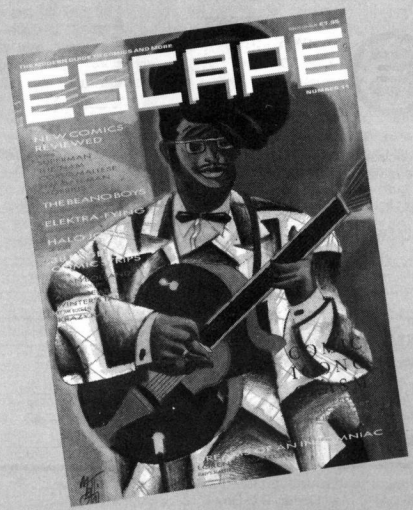
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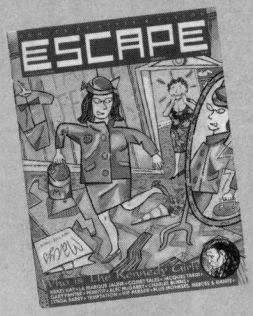
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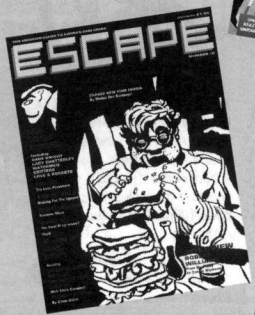
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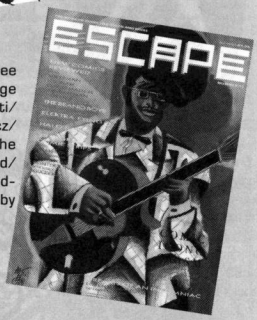
ISSUE EIGHT: ☐
New-look, New Size!/ Jacques Tardi/ Krazy Kat/ La Marque Jaune/ Comet Tales/ Gary Panter/ Primitif/ Alec/ Charles Burns/ Lynda Barry/ Temptation/ Hip Parade/ Plus Monkees, Dante & more!/ Cover by John Bagnall. 60 BIG pages,



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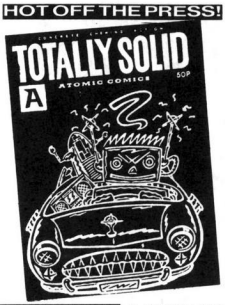
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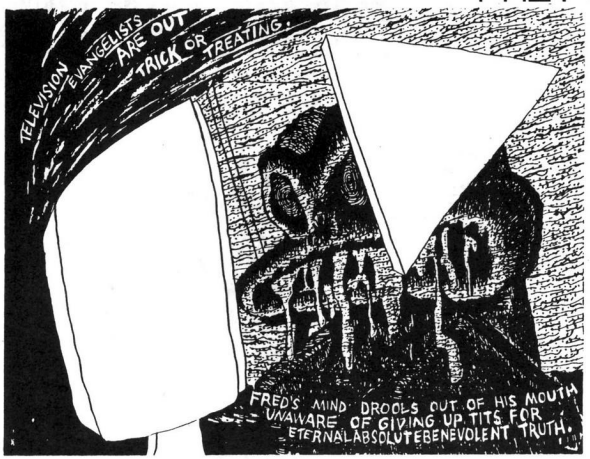
TOTALLY SOLID: A dazzling first comic from Neville Smith, who uses wildly inventive graphic stylings, from the brushstroke angst of 'Amnesia' to the diagrammatic shapes of 'Men's Shirts'. Neville bombards you with images from a technological future, dotted with lunatic touches. 24pp A4 magazine with silk screen cover, 50p + post from: 11 Watt Road, Erdington, Birmingham B23 6EU.

WIRED 1: Engineered by Roger Llewellyn, this outstanding compilation of scouse talents is an outcrop of last year's Punchlines Show at the Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool. Look out for Bertie Perkins' 'Teddy Boyle' cartoons, Frank Martin's graphiste acidtrip 'Psych!Out88' and Brian O'Toole's first ever coherent story. Also: John Bagnall, Ed Pinsent, Bob Parker & Roger L. As good as any issue of Knockabout. 28pp A4 magazine, 50p + post from: 14 Stanlowe View, Aigburth, Liverpool.



ATOM TAN 1: Watch these exciting new talents! Philip Bond draws 'Atom Tan', a Love & Rockets-styled post-nuclear bash and Jamie Hewlett turns in Paradaxesque 'Max Nasty' and together they send 'The Sewage Dogs' to find Morrissey's coffin. Their stories are full of pazzazz and pyrotechnics, dazzling layouts and OTT action. 28pp A4 magazine, £1 + post from: 21 Westland Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 7LB.
The Stilletto

Ed Pinsent reviews all the latest British Small Press Comics on the FAST FICTION mail order lists (free for an SAE/IRC from: 27 Bracewell Road, London W10 6AF) and runs the FAST FICTION Stand at London Comic Marts in Central Hall, Westminster (next dates October 10th and December 5th from 12 noon, admission free).



FRED AT ONE WITH THE LIGHT, ENTRANCED BY HIS RESENTFUL TV. FROM *SENSUAL TOAST* BY ION.

INITIATION

To a novice the mysteries of conceiving a comic can seem unfathomable.

HOW DO YOU DO IT? Back when comics first bloomed in American Sunday papers, cartoonists could make up the rules of the newborn medium as they went along. Privileged apprentices could learn on the art as assistants to professionals in studios; today such opportunities are rare. And if you go to art college, most tutors scorn comics, because they know nothing about them or how to teach them. Glenn Dakin remembers, 'I was aware that it was dangerous to say you were interested in comics, because tutors think you're in a world of your own and there's nothing they can do to help you.' So it's no surprise that many comics artists are self-taught and begin drawing comics in secret, perhaps emulating their favourite paragon, until the best of them develop their own style and voice.

But how can you teach people comics? Contrary to Marvel's myopic 'How To' manual, *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*, there is no one correct way to create them. If you impose one set viewpoint, you wind up with a classroom of characterless clones. On the other hand, if you pass on simply basic skills and put across the medium's broader history and possibilities, you can encourage students to see comics as a valid vehicle for self-expression, and not an assembly line.

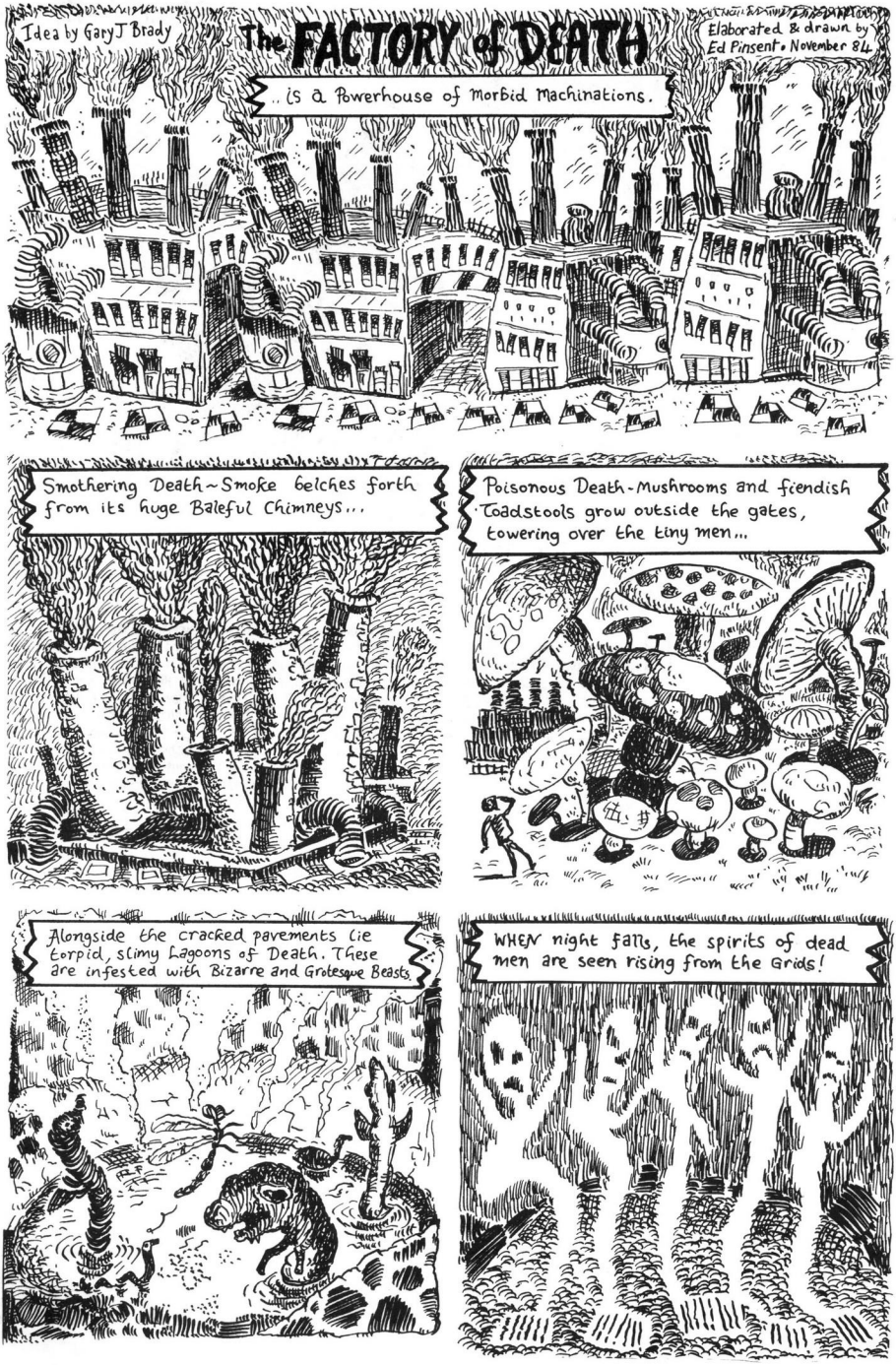
One of the earliest seats of comics learning was New York's School of Cartoonists and Illustrators, set up in 1947 by *Tarzan* artist Burne Hogarth. Many of his pupils went on to become Names, for example Wally Wood, Al Williamson and Gil Kane. It is now called the School of Visual Arts and its courses are run by Will Eisner and Harvey Kurtzman among others; their recent graduates (or dropouts!) include Drew Friedman, Pete Bagge, Mark Newgarden and Kaz. To join them, write for details to: 209 East 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010.

Eisner and Kurtzman put out annual anthologies of their students' work, *Gallery* and *Kar-Tunz*; both mags show their share of no-hopers, but usually a few tyros stand out. Two I'd single out are Mark Sunshine and Ion, who produce their own demented mini-comics. Mark's *Swing* is an 'awesome' collage of Gary Panter (who taught them at SVA) and George Herriman with coffee ring ads, classifieds and photos of diners. One dollar + post should cover it, from 14 Vista Drive, Morganville, NJ 07751. In Ion's intense miniature *Sensual Toast*, Martha & Fred Anus Nose are consumed by their telly's hallucinogenic cathode fever. His frenzied words and pictures are nightmarish and unforgettable. Send $2 + post for a copy to Ion Farrell, 1133 5th Ave, New York, NY 10128.

Among other schools in the States, the best known is Joe Kubert's School in New Jersey which trained Swamp Thing artists Steve Bissette, John Totleben and Rick Veitch. In Europe, prestigious colleges such as the Art School of Angoulême, the Institute Saint-Luc in Brussels, and the Zio Feininger and Nuova Eloisa Schools in Bologna, are turning out top-class talent.

Typically, in backward Britain there are no full-time courses (yet), but two weekly Workshops are running in London. The first was started in June 1984 at the Portobello Project by Amalia Redon—ring 01-221 4413 to know more. The tutor on Monday nights is 'V for Vendetta' virtuoso David Lloyd. His one-to-one teaching promotes a broad range of styles, from the confident cartooning of Peter McGeough to the African magic of Leo Eze. As well as being showcased in the course's magazine *Silicon Fish* (£1.20 + post from: 49/51 Porchester Road, London W2), several artists have published their own comics, such as Simon MacKie with his bedsit bohemians *Flick and Jube* and his forthcoming *Waikiki Luau* with Ben Rowden. The other course, run by cartoonist Francis Boyle at Southwark Institute, meets every Thursday evening and starts again on September 24th—ring 639 1178 for details. They put out their own comic too, *Mockers* (£1 including post from: 69A Balfour Street, London SE17 1PL).

To close its summer series of workshops with Posy Simmonds, Steve Bell, Dave Gibbons and Garry Leach, the ICA in London hosts a massive Escape Workshop at 2.00pm on Saturday, September 12th. All the Escape Artists will join the audience to produce a unique jam-session comic, drawn and printed in the gallery. Admission is £1.50 (free to ICA members). Bring your pens and book your place now on 01-930 3647. Finally, there's an ambitious Comics Workshop planned in Leeds in December—more news next issue. ≡
Paul Gravett


Idea by Gary J Brady
The FACTORY of DEATH
Elaborated & drawn by Ed Pinsent • November 84
... is a Powerhouse of Morbid Machinations.
Smothering Death ~ Smoke belches forth from its huge Baleful Chimneys...
Poisonous Death - Mushrooms and fiendish Toadstools grow outside the gates, towering over the tiny men...
Alongside the cracked pavements lie torpid, slimy Lagoons of Death. These are infested with Bizarre and Grotesque Beasts
WHEN night falls, the spirits of dead men are seen rising from the Grids!

THEN, before the stroke of Midnight, the eerie chant of Death emanates from the diabolical chimneys.


EEEE

ABSENT FRIENDS

by Phil Elliott and Paul Grist




WHO DID THIS?
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
LOOK - LET ME KNOW AND I'LL TAKE THIS TO THEM!
PLEASE, ITS OVER ... I JUST WANT TO FORGET ABOUT IT.
I CAN'T AFFORD TO BEAR GRUDGES.
PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW THAT THEY CAN'T GO ABOUT BEATING PEOPLE...
ESPECIALLY MY FRIENDS.
BUT YOU'LL ONLY MAKE IT WORSE ... DON'T YOU SEE THAT?
AND THIS? THIS MAKES IT BETTER?
HE WAS RIGHT YOU KNOW.
YOU CAN'T KEEP TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK. YOU CONCEDE TOO EASILY - AND THEN YOU COMPLAIN WHEN YOU FEEL ABUSED.

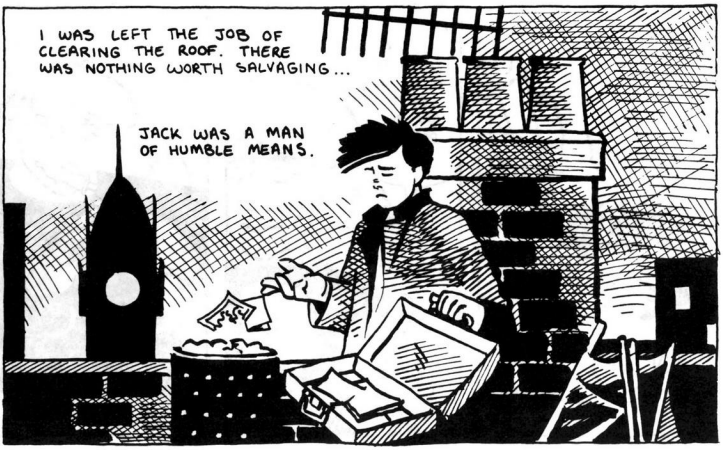

BE THE FIRST TO STRIKE A BLOW. LOOK, IF ITS ANY HELP, I'LL GIVE YOU A FEW LESSONS IN SELF DEFENCE.
NOW COME AT ME WITH THIS.
THE FIRST LESSON WAS ON THE HOUSE. THE SECOND'LL COST YOU A PINT OF BEST BITTER.
SO WHATS THE SECOND LESSON ?
NEVER LOWER YOUR DEFENCES.
COME ON... THE PUBS'LL BE OPEN SOON.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU COULD HAVE PUT UP WITH HIM.
I WONDER MYSELF. I GUESS AT THE TIME I FELT A CERTAIN RESPECT FOR JACK: HIS CAVALIER ATTITUDE AND HIS STRENGTH OF CHARACTER...
ROTTEN THOUGH IT MAY HAVE BEEN.


"THE BEGUILING CHARM OF EVIL"
LOOK, IF YOU KEEP STILL AND LET ME FINISH YOU'LL BE THE BELLE OF THE BALL.
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE WILL YOU. I'M NOT GOING...
I JUST WANT TO SLEEP.
JUST A BIT MORE AND I'LL LEAVE YOU IN PEACE ...
THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I REALLY HATED HIM.
AND OTHERS.


BUT AFTER A TIME I GOT TO WISHING HE'D GET OFF THE ROOF... GO AND SCROUNGE OFF OTHER FOLK. HE SCARED THE WITS OUT OF ME.


EVENTUALLY I PERSUADED THE LANDLORD TO HIRE SOME FELLOWS TO MAKE SURE THAT JACK VACATED THE PROPERTY.


JACK HAD ENOUGH SENSE TO STAY AWAY.


I WAS LEFT THE JOB OF CLEARING THE ROOF. THERE WAS NOTHING WORTH SALVAGING...
JACK WAS A MAN OF HUMBLE MEANS.


THAT WAS ALMOST TWO YEARS AGO.

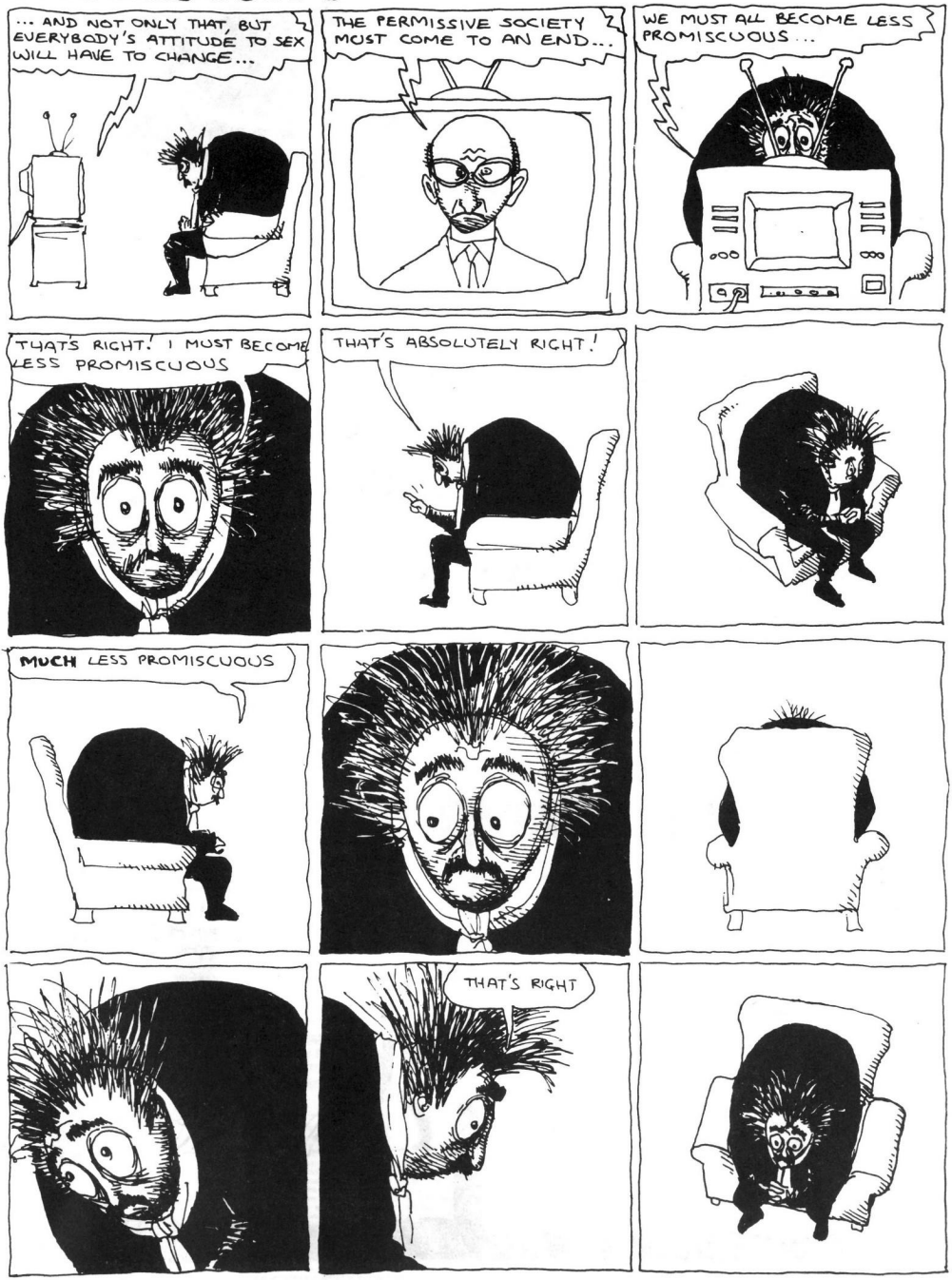

I THOUGHT I'D SEEN THE LAST OF JACK, UNTIL THIS MORNING. I'D FINISHED REBUILDING MR HOPKINS WALL...
DAVE!


... I TRAVELLED AROUND FOR A WHILE, PICKING UP SPARE CASH WHERE I COULD. IT WASN'T EASY BUT IT WAS GOOD TO GET OUT ON THE OPEN ROAD AGAIN.
LEAVING MY COSY ROOF WAS PROBABLY THE BEST THING I COULD HAVE DONE.
I FELT OBLIGED TO BRING HIM HOME.
IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY?
NO, MY GIRLFRIEND'S ... SHE LIVES HERE WITH ME.
PLEASE LET ME BUY YOU BOTH A DRINK...
... TO CELEBRATE... HER BIRTHDAY AND OUR TIMELY REUNION. I'LL MEET YOU BOTH AT EIGHT IN THE PUB WE WERE IN EARLIER.
BIRTHDAY WISHES
HAP
BIRT
TO
YO
SO, ARE YOU COMING?

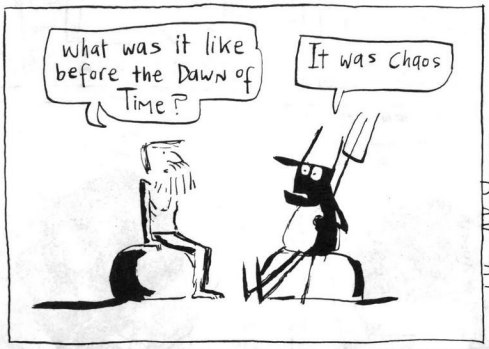

I DON'T REALLY FANCY TO...
I'M NOT KEEN ON THIS FELLOW AFTER WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME ABOUT HIM. I'D HATE TO THINK HE'D HANG AROUND... OR MOVE IN ABOVE US.
HE SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED. ALMOST RESPECTABLE EVEN.
ANYWAY, HE WANTS TO MOVE ON... HE'LL BE GONE TOMORROW.
COME ON, JUST A COUPLE OF DRINKS.
"ALRIGHT THEN."
SO MUCH FOR YOUR OLD FRIEND.
OH WELL, PERHAPS IT WAS FOR THE BEST.
DAVE! THANK GOD YOU'RE IN
... MY FLAT...
... PLEASE...
COME AND HELP ME.
I JUST GOT HOME ... AND I FOUND THE PLACE LIKE THIS...
...OH IT'S HORRID!
JACK NEVER HAD MUCH OF A GOOD SENSE OF DIRECTION.
NEVER LOWER YOUR DEFENCES
YOU GO IN WITH MARGIE... SHE'LL FIX A NICE CUP OF TEA.
OF COURSE I'LL PHONE THE POLICE.
WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS HERE, MRS DAVIS.

PROMISCUITY

BOLLAND

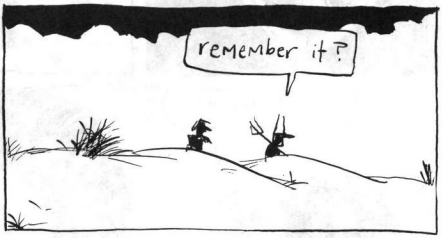



TEMPTATION
IF you're who I think you are, you must've been around a long time.
Yep
by Glenn Dakin


what was it like before the Dawn of Time?
It was Chaos


And then when the Earth was created?
That was a week to remember!


And do you remember Noah's Ark?


remember it?


I was personally responsible for taking one of the little creatures aboard!
How nice
which one?
Wood worm

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Her strip in The Guardian

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Bill Watterson's strip in The Daily Express



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The Brian Wilson of the Comic Vision

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Second City, Harrier

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From Zap! to Hup!, Last Gasp

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Little Nemo in Slumberland

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The Spirit, The Dreamer and others, Kitchen Sink

30 (-) **MILLIGAN & McCARTHY**
'Summer of Love' in News On Sunday and Paradax, Vortex



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Strong contenders for next issue's chart are: Asterix, Tex Avery, Pete Bagge, Mark Beyer, Bilal, Brute!, Dennis the Menace, The Far Side, Flintstones, Lloyd Llewellyn, Mad, Manara, Nexus, Panter, Popeye, Pratt, Ken Reid, Rupert, Savage Pencil, Superman, Top Cat, Transformers, Basil Wolverton.

PRIZE WINNERS

The *Watchmen* T-shirts have been delayed for several months, so as a nifty alternative prize we're sending a copy of the complete collected *Watchmen* novel to five lucky readers plucked out of the bran tub, who are:
Marc Baines, London; Martin Christie, Nottingham; Lloyd Raworth, London; Roy Redman, Littlehampton; W. Tremear, Alyth.

BEST IN ISSUE

Here are the top five favourite strips from last issue. Voted for by ESCAPE readers. Be sure and tell us which strips in this issue you like the most.

1	**Joe's Bar**	Muñoz & Sampayo
2	**In A Distant Galaxy**	Bob Lynch
3	**The Lighted Cities**	Chris Reynolds
4	**Abe Inherits The Moon**	Glenn Dakin
5	**Termite Fraternity**	John Bagnall

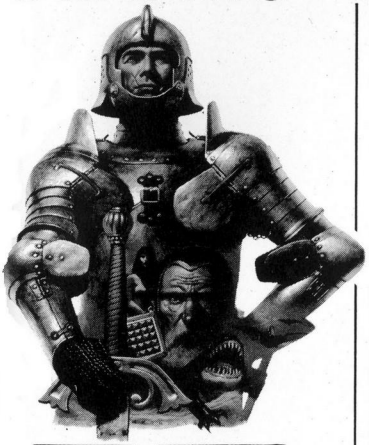
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